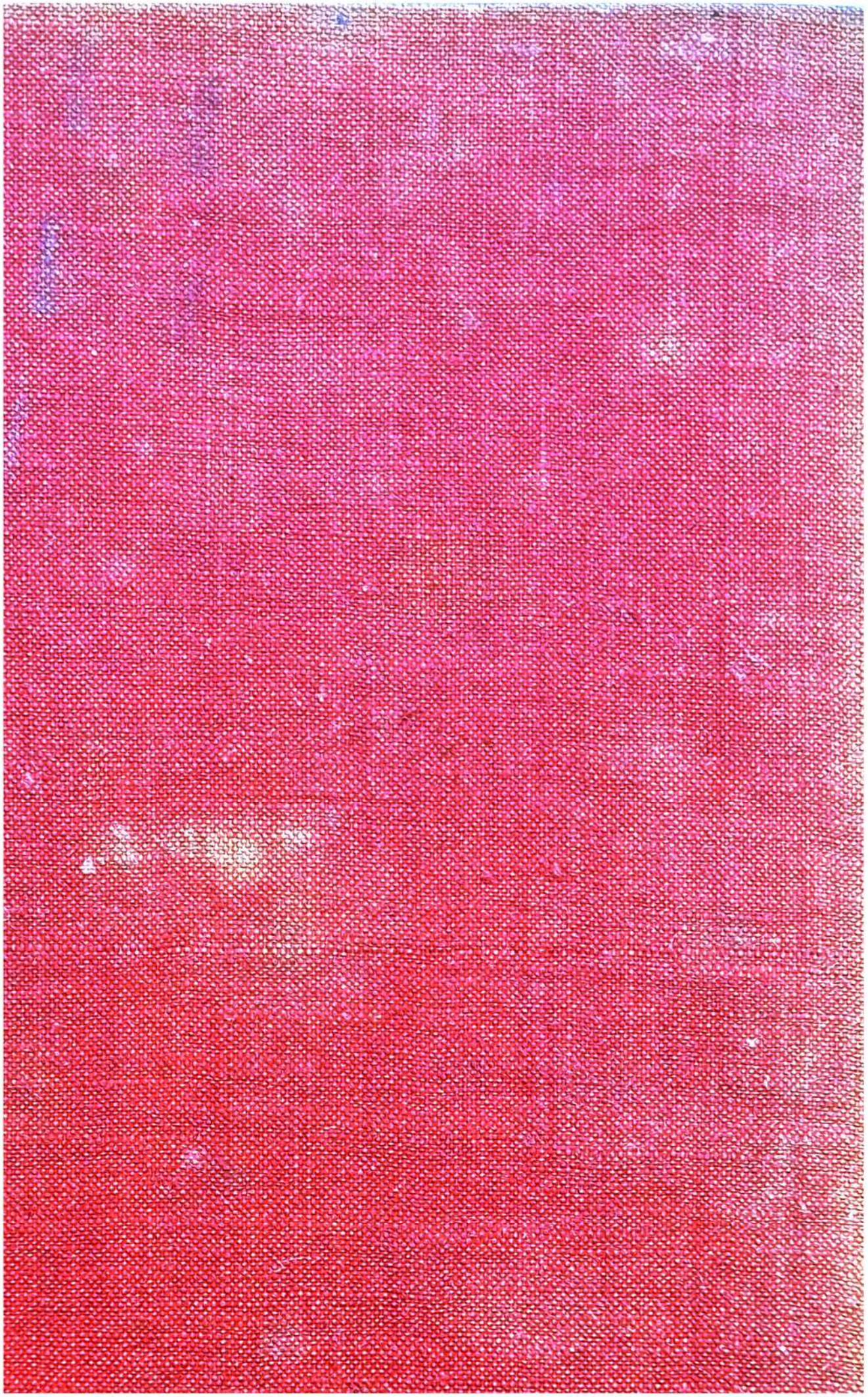

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MORE ECHOES FROM "THE MORNING WATCH"

INCLUDING TWELVE "REASONS FOR NOT GOING TO CHURCH"

(WITH ILLUSTRATIONS BY A. L. STRUTHERS)

BY THE LATE

REV. J. P. STRUTHERS, M.A.

GREENOCK

AUTHOR OF "STORIES TWICE TOLD," "PILGRIM CHEER," "WINDOWS IN HEAVEN," "ECHOES FROM 'THE MORNING WATCH,'" ETC.

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Preface

In issuing a third volume of stories from "The Morning Watch," some of the *Reasons for not going to Church* have, by request, been included. These reasons were not just whimsical imaginings. Most of them were listened to by my husband, while friends told him of others, and he thought a little sarcastic humour might open the eyes of such "Reasoners" to see the inconsistency of their own conduct.

"Answer a fool according to his folly, lest he be wise in his own conceit." Prov. xxvi. 5.

A. L. S.

Greenock, 1927.

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Daisy Dantle

"THREE prizes will be given for the best design in Daisies or other flowers, open to school-children under the age of fourteen." So ran one of the paragraphs in the advertisement of the Annual Flower Show in the local newspaper of a certain town.

Katie Mains was one of those who intended to compete. But what design was she to try? An anchor, or a ship, or a heart, or two hearts, or a clock, or what? And where was she to get the flowers?

The two Miss Dantles lived in an old-fashioned house that stood in two-and-a-half acres of its own ground on the outskirts of the town. Their only brother, Kenneth, had prided himself on being what he called an *exact* man: *exacting*, many said, was a fitter word. He had had one or two great trials in life, but these, though meant to sweeten, had only soured him.

He was specially touchy in the matter of his garden and little orchard. People who have never had a garden are apt to think that fruits and flowers grow of their own accord, like fishes in a stream, owing nothing to the man in whose grounds they happen to be. Though Mr. Dantle had often suffered from the hands of depredators, he had for many a day given anyone who seemed respectable a surly admittance to his

grounds. But after a band of youths, who claimed to be members of a Mutual Improvement Society, had played high jinks in his garden, and destroyed pounds' worth of roses and three young plum trees, he hardened his heart and set his face against all comers. In the United States one sometimes reads on a door the words, *Wait for an invitation*—a phrase that is even harsher than our own blunt *No admittance*, and they might have been safely put on Mr. Dantle's gate.

It was now five years since he had died, but the dead hand still held that door. The younger Miss Dantle thought it a pity and a sin that so much beauty should be wasted on themselves. The elder sister felt bound by her brother's vow. "What would Kenneth say if he saw us letting strangers go careering all over the place?" And to this the younger would reply, "I think he would say, 'I am glad my sisters are better and wiser and kinder than their brother was.'"

The old gardener sometimes tried to move her, but in vain.

"My brother said it, and when he said a thing, it was like the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not, and that's enough."

"Yes, Ma'am, but we are not Medes and Persians; we are Christians, and if we find we have made a mistake, we should be proud to own it and correct it. I expect some of the school children will be up this week asking leave to gather daisies. There is to be a competition for prizes open to them at the Show on Friday. What am I to say to them?"

"Do what Mr. Kenneth told you, and what I have told you repeatedly. Say 'No.'"

They say in books and in American newspapers—but it is not quite true—that the lawns in the grounds of the Oxford Colleges have been rolled for centuries, and are so carefully tended that if a single daisy shows its head, the dons are in consternation and the gardeners and weeders are summoned to instant battle against it. Miss Dantle had two lawns, and for the sake of appearance kept one of them, the one that was opposite the front door, absolutely free from daisies, but for the sake of the associations of her childhood, when she loved to make chains of them, allowed the daisies to do as they pleased on the other. It lay behind a row of rhododendrons beyond which no visitor was ever supposed to go.

The children round about kept trooping to her door, and for two days the gate was ever on the swing. On the third day she spoke to the policeman.

That night her sister slept little but prayed much. And her prayer was already being answered, though not in the way she thought of.

"I wish you to cut down all these daisies, James, the first thing you do to-morrow," was what Miss Dantle had said to the old gardener that night as he was leaving for his home. "It is not only for Mr. Kenneth's sake, but even more for the children's own sake that I refuse them what they wish. I should not be surprised if some of them climbed over the wall by daybreak and helped themselves."

"I'll be before them," said the gardener, "and as you say, ma'am, as much for their sakes as for Mr. Kenneth's." And the gardener went home chuckling.

"What's putting you in this grand humour?" said his wife.

"Well, you see, lass," he said, "we are like the Medes and Persians up at the big house; when we say a thing, even when it's wrong, we are not allowed to change it like Christians. But, like the Medes and Persians, the way is always open to make another decree. And that's what I've done. Miss Dantle says I am to cut down every daisy to-morrow for fear the children come and take them. And I'll cut them down as I am bidden, but the children will get them all the same, and all the quicker. For, you see, with the dry weather there's little grass growing, and the daisies have shot up their heads. So this is what I'll do. I'll raise the knife of the mower high enough just to cut off their heads, and I'll empty the mower pan each time it gets full over the dyke into a clean corner of the wood, and they'll not only get as many as they like, but they'll have no bother pulling them or cutting off the stalks. Tell Katie Mains to tell the others. There will be enough, and more than enough for as many as like to come."

And it all came to pass as the gardener had said. Every child that came got its little basket as full as it chose to make it. And Katie with the rest. She was the last to leave. "It's a pity," said the old man, "that so many should be left unused, and I have so many more to cut.

There are at least fifty in every square foot, for I have counted them, here and there, and the lawn is ninety feet by sixty. How many square feet is that, Katie?" "5,400, sir." "And if you multiply that by fifty, how many daisies should there be?" "270,000, sir."

"That's right, Katie. I didn't think you were such a good counter. That's more than a quarter of a million. There will be at least 100,000 over, and that's a pity. But what could anybody do with such a lot?"

And then it was that, a great idea having struck Katie Mains, she thanked the old gardener and said she would consult her mother.

On the previous Sabbath a missionary had been telling about Dr. Livingstone, and Dr. Stewart of Lovedale, and Dr. Laws, and what they had done for Africa—how they had made "the desert rejoice, and blossom as the rose." That was his text, Isaiah xxxv. 1, and the missionary wondered how long it would be till others had done for the whole of Africa what these great men had done for parts of it.

When Katie's father and mother and sisters and brothers were sitting talking about what the missionary had said, Katie's father told his children that when he was a boy and they were asked to draw a map at school, he always chose Africa, the outline was so easy, and there was so little to mark inside. "I did Africa so often," he added, "that I believe I could do it yet from memory. Fetch me a slate." And then he drew it, his wife looking at the children all the time with eyes which said, "See what a wonderful

man your father is." Then, having drawn it and put in the river Nile and lake Tchad, and the mountains of the Moon, he said, "Bring me your atlas and we'll compare my map with Africa as it is now." And oh! how the children laughed when they saw how like the two outlines were, and how unlike the two insides.

Now Katie's idea was this. What if I make a map of Africa in daisies and call it 'Darkest Africa shall blossom as the rose'?

There was an odd bit of blue calico in the house, left over from the making of curtains, and on this Katie, having begged it from her mother, carefully marked the outline of the map in chalk Then with needles and bobbins, or pirns as they call them in that countryside, she set off to where the daisies were, and stitched and stitched, and stitched with all her might all day, saving for a brief half-hour she snatched at dinner-time, and by bed-time her map was almost done. In the morning she was up by five, for she had forgotten to put in Madagascar. By eight she had given her work its finishing touches and, I tell you, it looked well. The blue background of the calico made a splendid circumambient sea—though that was not her word. For the rivers she used long blades of grass, and for the lakes, some wild forget-me-not she was happy enough to find in the little wood by the burn's side. So rich was her inventive faculty that if she had had a few more hours I do believe she would have planted flags by the brink of the river Nile and achieved a little ark with a baby Moses in it!

And she got first prize, of course.

As Miss Dantle attended all the flower shows far and near, she was present at this one, and heard the judges give their awards. The chairman, a young minister, newly come, who was not yet up to all the gossip of the town, had been struck with the number of designs in daisies, and happened to ask the policeman in attendance where the children got them all.

"Oh!" he said, "they are all Miss Dantle's, and I can tell you a good story about that"—but before he could tell it, the minister was summoned to the platform.

I need not tell you all he said; only this, however, that he praised the map of Africa, and mentioned the difficulty the judges had in awarding the other prizes. There had never been in the recollection of any person such a show of daisies. Before handing the successful competitors their prizes, he said, he would like them to give one special cheer. He had just learnt from one who was present that almost all the daisies they saw, and they were like the stars of heaven for multitude, were from the gardens of a lady who, he was informed, was in the hall—Miss Dantle. Might he take the liberty of saying Miss Daisy Dantle?—for he was sure the lady who could do a thing like that must be herself a Daisy.

Miss Daisy Dantle—for the name stuck to her—hurried home like Haman, with her head covered.

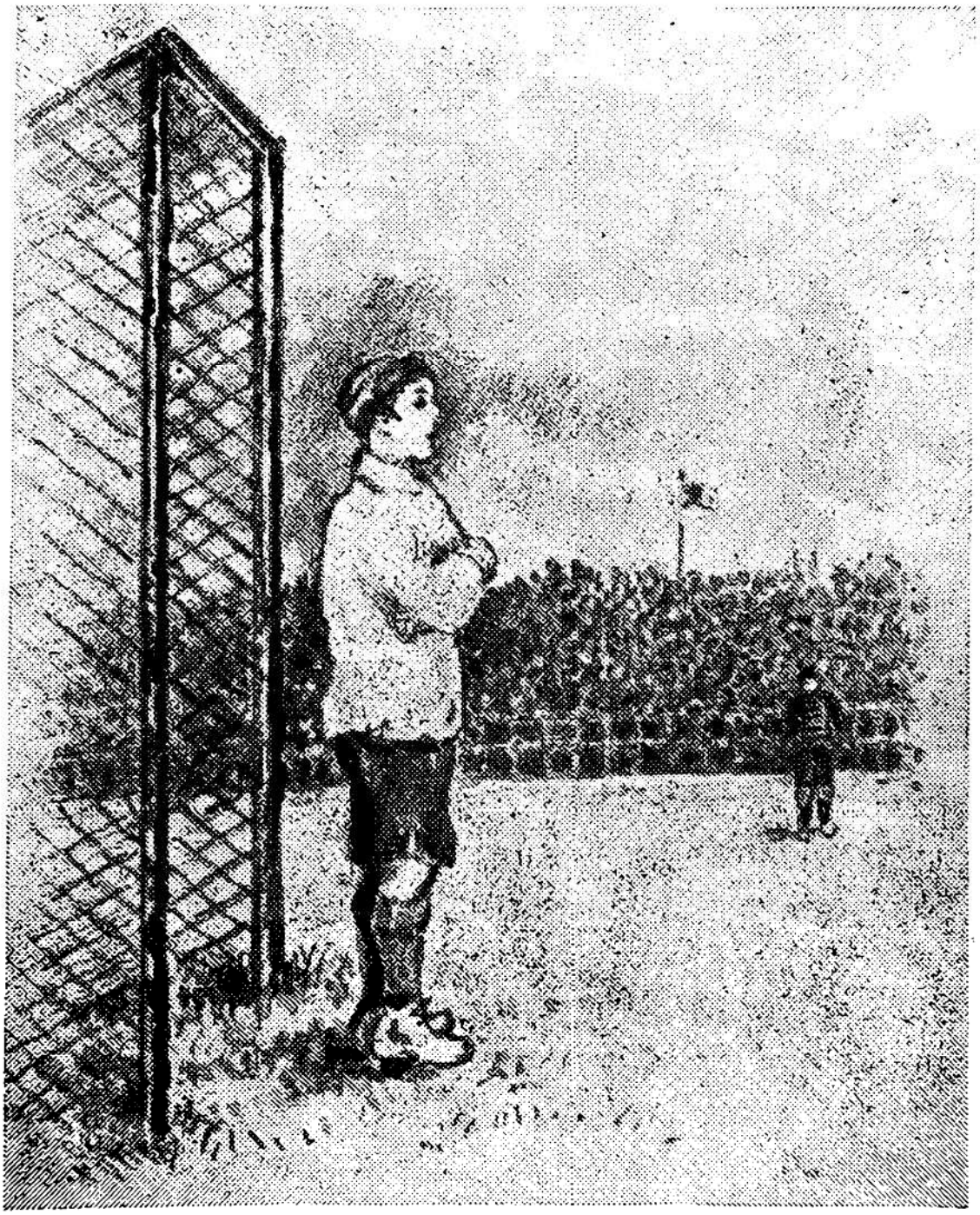
"What am I to do?" she said to her sister; "for the last thing I heard was 'Three cheers for the Daisy.'"

"Well, my dear, you have brought a new name into the family. We must both try to live up to it. That is all I can say."

That night, of course, all sleep fled from her. But at six in the morning, when she was just falling over, the whirr of the mower on the front lawn roused her once more and set her thinking again.

"I believe," she said to herself, "that it's James that has been at the bottom of all this, for when he said he agreed with me that to cut down the daisies would be a wise thing *for the children's sakes*, he gave that funny little cough of his that I always notice when he is up to one of his pranks."

REASONS FOR NOT GOING TO CHURCH. I.



THIS lad, keeping goal at a football match before 9,000 spectators, is determined never to be a "professional." But, I regret to say, he rarely goes to church. His reason is, that he has such a long way to walk down the aisle to his father's pew near the front, and he hates to have people staring at him.

The Returned Task

At the age of forty, Thomas Carlyle had finished the first volume of his "French Revolution." The actual writing of it had occupied five months, but there had been years of preparation. He and his wife were very poor at the time. For three-and-twenty months he had not earned one penny. He had got several offers of work, especially on the *Times* newspaper, but the conditions were such as he could not accept. He would not write in favour of things which he did not believe. For, as Mr. Froude says, "he was one who never wrote an idle word or a single sentence which he did not with his whole heart believe to be true." However, he had now written the first volume of a book which he hoped would pay his way for a little at least. But one evening, the 6th of March, 1835, as he was sitting with his wife, a knock was heard at the door, a hurried step came up the stairs, and John Mill entered, deadly pale, and at first unable to speak. Mill was at that time his closest friend, and had been given a reading of the manuscript of the book.

"Why, Mill," said Carlyle, "what ails thee, man? What is it?"

After a little while the truth came out in broken sentences. Mill had left the manuscript lying about, and a servant had destroyed it, all but four or five little bits of leaves. Mill,

instead of going away at once, foolishly sat on with the Carlyles till near midnight. They wished to be alone. His labour was gone, his notes had been destroyed, and gone, too, were the emotions with which as at fever heat he had written the book. "A man can re-write what he has known but not what he has felt." It was a sore night to him; he had strange dreams about his dead father and sister, and a pain as of something cutting at his heart. The next day he wrote in his journal: "But on the whole, should I not thank the Unseen? For I was not driven out of composure hardly for moments. Walk humbly with thy God. How I longed for some psalm or prayer that I could have uttered. Oh, that I had faith! Then there were nothing too hard or too heavy for me. Cry to thy inmost heart to God for it. Surely He will give it thee. At all events, it is as if my invisible schoolmaster had torn my copy-book when I showed it, and said, 'No, boy! thou must write it better.' What can I, sorrowing, do but obey—obey and think it the best? To work again! on in His name!"

So that day he sent off for fresh paper. Mill was a rich man and sent him £200. Carlyle returned it, but afterwards took half, as the fair wages of his five months labour. The work of re-writing the burnt volume was even harder than he expected. April passed, May came, but he could make no headway. Never in his life had he felt so "disconsolate, beaten down and powerless."

So he locked up his books, dismissed the whole

thing from his mind, and took a fortnight's rest, reading anything, German, French, or English, that came to hand. Then at it once more, through June, July, August, and on till the middle of September.

"On Monday last," he says in his journal, "about four o'clock on a wet day, I finished that MS. What a year this has been! I have suffered much, but also lived much. Courage! hat firmly set on head, foot firmly planted. Fear nothing but fear."

Mrs. Carlyle, a genius herself, thought the second version better than the first. He thought it worse, but not much worse. The whole three volumes were finished on the 12th January, 1837. As he gave it to his wife to read, he said: "I know not what the world will do with this book, or misdo, or entirely forbear to do, as is likeliest, but this I could tell the world; you have not had for a hundred years any book that comes more direct and flamingly from the heart of a living man."

Isaac Newton had a similar but more painful experience. He had been working at chemistry, specially with reference to colours, for twenty years, had made thousands of experiments, and spent many hundreds of pounds—though pounds are hardly worth mentioning in comparison with years. When he was at church one day, his pet dog, Diamond, upset a candle, and all his papers were destroyed. When he returned and saw what had been done, he said, "Oh, Diamond, thou little thinkest the mischief thou hast done."

Newton was then about forty-five, but he never

fully recovered from the shock though he lived for other forty years.

Now, I must tell you a strange coincidence. When I was copying out these two stories, I was asked to make a call, and went somewhat grudgingly. On a table in the house to which I went lay the "Memorials of FRANCES RIDLEY HAVERGAL," the distinguished poetess. I took up the book and opening it by chance found that in 1876, when she was forty, she had the same trial. And as Carlyle consoled himself by thinking of God as a schoolmaster who makes a boy write a fresh-copy-book, so she too speaks of "the turned lesson." When a lesson is not quite "by heart,"

> Then He gives in His wise and patient grace,
> That lesson again,
> With the mark still set in the self-same place.

"Very patiently," says her sister, "had she prepared many sheets of manuscript music for her book, 'Songs of Grace and Glory.' Well, do I remember the day it was completed. We were at home and she came down from her study with a large roll for the post, and with holiday glee exclaimed, 'There, it is all done! And now I am free to write a book!'" A week after, the post brought her news: "Messrs. Henderson's premises were burned down this morning about four o'clock. We fear the whole of the stereotypes of your musical edition are destroyed, as they were busy printing it. It will be some days before the *debris* will be sufficiently cooled to ascertain how the stereotype plates stand."

Further news confirmed the loss: "Your musical edition, together with the paper sent for printing it, has been totally destroyed."

This is what she wrote to her sisters: "The meaning of this to me is that, instead of having finished my whole work, I have to begin again from the beginning, and I shall probably have at least six months of it. The greater part of the manuscript is simply *gone*, for I have kept no copy whatever, and have not even a list of the tunes. Every chord of my own will have to be reproduced; every chord of every one else re-examined and revised. In writing all my previous books I have always taken the trouble to make two copies; but, finding I never gained any practical benefit, I did not (as I considered) waste time on this case! Of most of the new work which has cost me a winter's labour, I have not even a memorandum left, having sent everything to the printers. However, it is so clearly 'Himself hath done it,' that I can only say, 'Thy way, not mine, O Lord.' I have thanked Him for it more than I have prayed about it."

To a friend she writes: "One must be an infidel not to see God's hand upon one most distinctly in such a matter as this. But it was very good of Him to give me the opportunity of learning an unlearned lesson, and of offering, as more willing service, what had been unwilling. He has been overwhelmingly gracious to me the last few days, quite startling me."

The Castle of Saint Andrews

This Castle, built more than seven hundred years ago, stands on a rock that overhangs the sea. It is now in ruins, but it is famous in Scottish history. In it George Wishart, one of the martyrs of the First Reformation, spent his last night on earth. Through its gates he was led forth, his hands bound behind his back, a chain about his waist, rope about his neck, and bags of gunpowder tied round his body. And then, being fastened to the stake, he kissed his executioner in token of forgiveness, and commended himself to God, crying with a loud voice these words, "O Saviour of the world, have mercy upon me. Father of heaven, I commend my spirit into Thy holy hands." The executioner thereupon kindled the fire, and the powder in the bags blew up. The Captain of the Castle, seeing he was still alive, came near and bade him be of good courage. To which he answered, "This flame hath scorched my body, yet it hath not daunted my spirit." While all this was going on, Cardinal Beaton and some other Romish priests sat at one of the Castle windows that had been hung with tapestry and fitted with rich cushions for the occasion, enjoying the spectacle. This happened on the 1st of March, 1546; on the 28th May after, Cardinal Beaton was himself put to death as Mr. Wishart had foretold; "He who from yonder place beholdeth us with such pride shall within a few days

lie in the same, as ignominously as he is now seen proudly to rest himself."

In this Castle John Knox lived some time, lecturing in the Chapel to his pupils on the Gospel according to John. Here too, he dispensed the Lord's Supper to the garrison and others who had renounced Popery, this being the first time the ordinance had been publicly observed in Scotland in the Protestant manner.

When the Castle fell into the hands of the French in 1547 he was one of the prisoners who were taken. He was put on board one of their galleys, loaded with chains, and condemned to work at the oar. The year after, his galley came back to Scotland, and cruised off the East Coast, on the look-out for English vessels. Knox had been seized with fever, and his life despaired of. But, as his bitterest enemies allowed, his courage never failed. One day their ship was lying off the coast between St. Andrews and Dundee. Mr. (afterwards Sir James) Balfour pointed to the spires of St. Andrews and asked him if he knew the place. "Yes," said he, "I know it well; for I see the steeple of that place where God first opened my mouth in public to His glory; and I am fully persuaded, how weak soever I now appear, that I shall not depart this life, till that my tongue shall glorify His godly name in the same place." And come back and glorify God he did in that place, and others, as Mr. Froude says, "to some purpose." There he spent the latter part of his life. "Mr. Knox would sometimes come in," says James Melville in his diary, "and repast him in our college yard, and

call us scholars unto him and bless us, and exhort us to know God, and His work in our country, and stand by the good cause, to use our time well, and learn the good instructions and follow the good example of our masters."

"On the Sabbath and other days," continues James Melville, "I heard him teach the prophecies of Daniel. I had my pen and my little book, and took away such things as I could comprehend. In the opening up of his text he was moderate the space of an half hour; but when he entered to application, he made me so to grue and tremble, that I could not hold a pen to write. He was very weak. I saw him every day of his doctrine (that is, whenever he preached) go hulie and fear (that is, slowly and cautiously), with a furring of marticks round his neck, a staff in the one hand, and good, godly Richard Ballenden, his servant, holding up the other oxter, from the Abbey to the Parish Kirk, and by the said Richard and another servant, lifted up to the pulpit, where he behoved to lean at his first entry, but, ere he had done with his sermon, he was so active and vigorous, that he was like to ding the pulpit in blads and fly out of it."

REASONS FOR NOT GOING TO CHURCH. II.

THAT young woman is not going to church because a few Sabbaths ago, three inches of braid on her dress—fortunately not a new one—were torn by a nail in the pew. (It may have been done on the Monday, she admits, when she was shopping, but she rather thinks not.) And she wonders why the Minister doesn't speak to the Elders, or whoever it is who has to do with that kind of thing.

But she has gone out this week brambling with some companions. They had five days of it last year, and SUCH fun, though when they got home in the evening their clothes were in perfect rags, and what with scrambling in and out of ditches, and climbing over dykes, and forcing their way through thorns and prickles, they used up as many pots of vaseline anointing their wounds as they made pots of jelly.

Mr. Sandison

The Man Whose Mind Was Weak

Mr. and the Lady Constance Moseley-Grigg were sitting on a box at the end of a little West Coast pier, waiting for the steamer *Whaup*, now two hours overdue, and you may guess, if you choose, the kind of humour they were in. But you will guess wrong, for they never were in better mood, and that for two reasons. They had come down from their place in Wales to see a shooting in Argyllshire, and to their amazement and delight had found it, and everything about it, even better than its advertised description. Then, secondly, according to their wont on every journey that they took, they had had adventures, and the last of these had been the best. They had fallen in with an oddity of a man!

Old Mr. Sandison had come to the village two years before from Glasgow, and lived in a little cottage a mile up round the point. In the course of a long life, though his wages never exceeded twenty-two shillings, he and his wife had laid past money enough to bring in about five shillings and fourpence a week of interest. His old master would have made his wages two pounds and more rather than lose him. But Mr. Sandison did not know that, and even had he known it he would never have had the courage to ask for an advance. It was, he thought, a master's part to offer, not a servant's part to ask. How they were able to save so much, neither

Mr. nor Mrs. Sandison was ever able to make out. But the reason was simply this—they were thrifty and they were generous, and so they got the blessing God has promised in His word. After the death of their two little ones they lived together over forty years. Then she died, and the old man, now very deaf, was left alone. A month after, his old master's son, who thought himself a very clever fellow—"up-to-date" was his favourite phrase—gave his old workman his dismissal. Mr. Sandison, after answering advertisements innumerable, found out that no one was willing to have him, willing though he was to serve even for a boy's wage. To remain in Glasgow he saw was out of the question. He set out to look for a new home, and after visiting some of the villages on the West Coast, found the place that God had prepared for him. It was a lonely little thatched cottage, with a tiny kitchen, and a tinier room, a bit of garden and a beach abounding in driftwood, all for £3 a year. Thither the old man had come to live, and he lived well. Milk, especially buttermilk, was easy to be had from an adjoining farm; peasemeal and oatmeal, lentils and barley, did not cost much, and needed no skilled cook; he had a cup of tea or coffee twice a day, and now and again he caught fish off the rocks where no one had ever caught them before, perhaps because no one had tried, or perhaps because the fishes had orders from their Master to put themselves at this good man's service. He had, therefore, bread enough and to spare, and always a penny or two to give away.

On their way to the shooting-lodge Mr. Moseley-Grigg, seeing the old man at his door, had asked him if he could oblige him by taking in a telegram he had forgotten to send off when passing through the village.

"I'm just going to the village, and I'll do it with pleasure."

When the message was written, Mr. Moseley-Grigg handed him half-a-crown and said, "Please keep the change." But the old man would not hear of it; it would be an awful-like thing, he said, to be paid for doing a little thing like that, seeing he was going into the village anyway; and do what they would, they could not make him yield.

"Yes," said the driver, in answer to their questions, "I know him; he's a Mr. Sandison, a little bit weak in the mind, but he'll hand in the telegram quite right, for all that."

"Ah, well," said the lady, "it is very sad to see anyone with a mental defect, but I wish it oftener took the form it has done in his case. I don't recollect any instance like that in England, and I don't think from what I hear that it is very common in Scotland."

On their way back, a few hours after, they saw a paper pinned on his door with the words—"The telegram was handed in at 10.10 all right."

"Now, isn't that very considerate?" said the Lady Constance to her husband. "Do you think there is any chance of seeing that old gentleman in the village?" she added, speaking to the driver.

"It's hard to say, ma'am," was the answer. "You can never tell where you'll meet him.

The number of things the poor creature gets to do is perfectly astonishing."

The Piermaster confirmed the driver's words and said there was no doubt the man wasn't "all there." He added some particulars, of which I can only give a few.

"Did you notice the ridiculously shapen, ugly coat he had on? He got that made by an old tailor down the road there that's paralysed on the one side, out of a bit of cloth the tailor had had lying by him these dozen years, and he could have got a decent well-made suit for the same money. And he has great big pockets in it full of all sorts of rubbish! I'll tell you how we found that out. It was one Sabbath day. You know he always comes to the church though he doesn't hear a word the minister says, and one day, during the first prayer—you know we stand at the prayer in Scotland, at least we do that here—a tremendous thunder-shower came on, and he saw through the window that the drains were choked, and that in a little the water would be into two cottages whose owners were from home. So out he goes and stands in the water up to his knees, clears the gratings and then he comes in again to the sermon. My word, the most o' us would have been only too glad of the chance to get away. There happened to be a fire on in the minister's room that day, and after the sermon some of us made him come in and dry his coat. It was as wet as a divot. Well, didn't John Ferguson, one o' the elders, happen to turn the coat upside down, and the next moment out came tumbling on to the floor a dozen or two

old nails and tackets and bits o' broken glass and a handful or two o' thorns! Of course, we never let on we saw them, but we had often wondered what it was he was always picking off the street—he has a terrible trick o' doing that—and now we understood. You see, sir, it turned out that one day he had seen a young lad's bicycle punctured, as they call it, by one o' those queer-shaped plates wi' nails in them that some people mend their boots wi', and the lad told him it meant an eight-mile walk and a chance of losing his last train for home, besides a lot of expense. And ever since, he lifts these things off the road whenever he sees them, and he had forgotten to empty his pocket on the Saturday!

"And here's another queer thing he does. Lots o' steamers pass here in the summer time, and if he sees bairns on board or school-trips, he must go out and wave a white towel to them; he says bairns like to wave and to be waved to when they get a sail. But there's a funnier thing than that. We have lots o' visitors in summer, and he's very deaf, and can't hear what they say, but he found out that most of them wanted to know the correct time, and when the different steamers went back, and where the roads lead to. And so what does he do but put his clock into the window with its face to the road and the words printed below it—'Correct Steamboat Time.' He can write very well himself, for I have seen him many a time, but he got the best writer in the school to do it, a smart little lass, and then he got her to print a lot more things about when the boats go, and how far it is to this

place and that, and where there's a particularly fine view, and where there's a sandy shore for wading on.

"And then, just to please people when they are coming back and wondering if their faces are sunburnt, he keeps a looking-glass on a table at the end o' his garden, and a jug that he fills wi' water out of the spring and a tumbler beside it. He used to keep the table close to the house, but he thought people didn't get as long a look into it that way as they would like, and so he shifted it. Ay, and he has a young crow that he found on the road one day wi' one o' its legs broken, and one Sabbath it had crept into his pocket and fell asleep, and the singing wakened it, and didn't it put out its head and cry 'Craw! Craw!' I could tell you a lot more, sir, for I'm very sorry for the man, but here's the steamer coming, and I hope we'll see her ladyship and yourself in August."

"Thank you very much, but I must say I can't help thinking your pity towards that man is a little misplaced, for I think, from all I've seen and heard, that Mr. Sandison, so far from being a fool, is a *genius!*"

"And a *saint!*" added the Lady Constance, "and it will do us both good to see as much of him as possible when we come to our new home."

"Do you know," said the Piermaster to one of his brother elders six months after, "I'm beginning to think these English people are right in what they said about Mr. Sandison, only, if he's right in the mind, the rest o' us are wrong in the mind, *and that's a thing I'm very unwilling to admit.*"

Jerome Savonarola

JEROME SAVONAROLA suffered martyrdom at Florence, 1498. His first wish was to be a doctor, but trouble made him think about God. When he was nineteen, his daily prayer was—"Lord, teach me the way that my soul should walk." At twenty-two he entered a Dominican monastery at Bologna. When he was thirty, he began to preach at Florence, but after a few days nobody would come to listen and his course of lectures had to be stopped. Seven years afterwards vast crowds flocked to hear him. Florence was a wicked city in a wicked age. The Pope at that time was Innocent VIII., a man whose name and openly immoral life gave rise to many a jest at Rome. Savonarola preached chiefly on the Book of Revelation, warning the people and the clergy to flee from the wrath to come. The ruler of Florence at that time was Lorenzo the Magnificent, a great friend to art and literature, but more than half a pagan. Under his rule "liberty was buried." When he was dying in 1492, he sent for the great preacher and asked what he must do to be saved. "You must first of all repent and have true faith in God's mercy." Lorenzo agreed to this. "Secondly, you must give up all your ill-gotten wealth." To that he also agreed after some hesitation. "Lastly, you must restore the liberties of Florence." But

at this the dying man turned his face to the wall and became silent.

After Lorenzo's death the troubles of the Florentines increased, as did also the power and force of Savonarola's preaching. He became virtually dictator. Gambling, drinking, and all kinds of wickedness were suppressed. The very boys and girls seemed to put themselves on the Lord's side. Florence, to all appearance, became the city of the Great King. The people gathered their unholy books and sinful ornaments, and burned them in the public square. So costly was the pile at this "burning of the vanities," as it was called, that a merchant from Venice offered 22,000 gold florins for it. The authorities rejected the offer, and threw the merchant's portrait into the fire.

In 1492 Alexander VI. became pope, perhaps the worst pope that ever lived, and certainly the worst ruler of his time. He was a perjurer, a murderer, a poisoner, and was himself poisoned eleven years afterwards by a dish he had prepared for twelve cardinals. Savonarola, who never shrank from reproving vice, who even in his youth had reproved the wife of a reigning lord for interrupting divine service by coming noisily into Church, did not spare the pope. Alexander tried bribery at first, and offered him the red hat which all cardinals wear. "No hat will I have," was his answer, "but that of a martyr reddened with my own blood." His desire was only too soon fulfilled. The goodness of the Florentines, like the morning cloud and the early dew, passed soon away. When he entered his pulpit he found

an ass-skin spread over the cushion, and nails stuck in the board on which he was wont to strike with his hand. On the 17th April, 1498, he marched to the famous "trial by fire," singing, "Let God arise, and let his enemies be scattered."

You will read in George Eliot's "Romola," and in other books, about the events of that day, for yourself, I hope, when you grow up. Savonarola returned home that night amid jeers and curses, a disappointed man. By order of the pope, who thirsted for his blood, he was imprisoned, and then day after day tortured cruelly. In his agony he said anything they wished, but the moment he was taken from the rack he would cry out in shame, "My God, I denied Thee through fear of pain." He was found guilty of heresy, and his sentence having been confirmed by the pope, executed on the morning of the 23rd May. Two others died with him. A huge cross had been erected with bundles of wood heaped at its base.

"As the prisoners, clad in haircloth," says a writer, "were taken across a wooden bridge that led to the Cross, some boys thrust sharp sticks between the planks to wound their feet. First came the ceremonial of degradation. A black mantle and long white tunic were thrown over the victims, and then roughly stripped off by the Bishop of Vasana. "I separate thee," said the Bishop, "from the Church militant and the Church triumphant." "Not from the Church triumphant," replied Savonarola, "that is beyond thy power." Savonarola was the last to suffer.

The bodies of his two disciples, Fra Dominico and Fra Silvestro, already dangled from the arms of the Cross before he himself was hanged on the beam in the centre. Then the pile was set fire to. For a moment the wind blew the flames aside, leaving the three bodies untouched. "A miracle!" cried some of the weeping by-standers, but then the fire leapt up, and ferocious yells rang from the mob.

At dusk the remains of the martyrs were put into a cart and thrown into the river Arno.

The Ploughing Match

JOHN JAMIESON and Andrew Todd were the best ploughmen in our county, and both so good that Todd, who was second best, would have been easily first anywhere else. We had a Ploughman's Cup, which had to be won three times running before it could become the winner's property. Jamieson had won it the two last years, and Todd the two before. Jamieson was our precentor. After raising the tune, he always sang the tenor part—I think I hear him yet, and our singing was famous far and near. Todd had once been very foolish, but had not touched drink for nearly two years.

The annual ploughing match in the January I speak of was looked forward to with unusual interest. The prizes were to be given entirely for the best ploughed lots, the men to use their own ploughs and horses, and no borrowing to be allowed. The first prize was £6, and the silver medal, and of course, the Cup, to which a newcomer into the county had added 12 lbs. of tea for the wife, mother, or sweetheart of the successful ploughman. The second prize was £5, to which the Member of Parliament for the county had added a box of groceries, containing along with other things two bottles of whiskey. Sir William Spiers was a weak, though kind-hearted man. He was easily captured by a phrase. His favourite word was "statesman-like," and he never was more surely wrong than

when he would say "We must take a broad, statesmanlike view of things," but it mightily impressed some of his constituents.

The one who has been a drunkard has often, for a time, a terrible longing for his old sin.

> "In a hollow land
> From which old fires have broken men may fear
> Fresh fire and ruin."

When Todd heard of the contents of the box the two armies within him joined battle. His poor wife saw the struggle beginning and fell to praying more earnestly than ever. She told her fears to Jamieson, who had been her own and her husband's best friend, and he, meeting Sir William on the road one day, asked him respectfully not to give whisky as a prize.

"Well, Jamieson, you know one has to look at things from a statesmanlike point of view, and——"

"I don't know, sir," was the answer, "what meaning you attach to the word statesmanlike, but I don't see any statesmanship in tempting poor men to get drunk."

"Oh," said he laughing, "I don't see much harm in a ploughman getting a little bit happy now and then."

"May God forgive you, sir, but you don't know what you are saying," was the precentor's answer, uttered with a vehemence and holy earnestness that made the baronet say to his wife that evening, "I didn't think there was a man in the county that would have dared to speak that way to me."

Jamieson was to be married in May, and the girl who was to be his wife had planned where the Cup should stand if her husband won it.

When the match day came the prizes were on view in a large tent. Bread and cheese and milk were given to all comers, and on our minister's suggestion the milk was served in the silver jug. More than one boy that day determined, if ever he became rich, to have a silver mug, gilt inside, for drinking his milk out of. Todd found himself looking at the grocery box before he was aware of it and looking at it once or twice after he said he wouldn't. Jamieson noticed him and made up his mind at once—he would try for the second prize and let the cup go! He had but a minute or two to speak to his future wife; but he told her his design. It was a disappointment to her in many ways, but after a moment's thought she said, "Yes, I approve."

There were forty ploughs at work that day and each plough had to do two rigs. Jamieson and Todd, oddly enough, were placed next each other, and could not avoid seeing each other's work. Jamieson soon saw that his rival's ploughing was good, but that it could be almost perfect if the plough were altered ever so little. He told this to the minister, who was known as a good judge of ploughing, and asked him to get Todd to make the change. Todd did so, and from that moment his work was simply exquisite. The furrows sat plumb, with a clean seam between them, and of course no grass looking up, and as straight as if Euclid himself had made them, while the "outs and ins" were

unsurpassable for tidiness. A crowd watched the two men all day. It was evidently to be a neck-and-neck race between them, but most agreed Jamieson would have it by a very little.

The men had twenty minutes' interval to rest their horses and themselves.

"Your husband's to be first," said Jamieson to Mrs. Todd.

"Oh, no, no, he'll not be first, and I have been praying all day he may be third."

"And that is just what he won't be," said the precentor smiling.

They were all to finish by half-past three. Everything would depend, it was seen, on the last ten furrows, and Jamieson was ploughing splendidly.

There were but six "bouts" to go, and the cup was as good as his. How it happened no one exactly noticed, something went wrong with that furrow and the next. Jura, the horse that walked on the land, saw it, though Hosie, the one that went into the furrow, didn't. I was sorry for Jura, and when she turned she gave her master a look as if to say, "Surely you won't disgrace us now after such a grand day's work as this?"

But the last two furrows were as bad, and the judges, though sore against their wills, awarded Todd first prize.

The look of the faces of the crowd when the decision was announced is spoken of to this day. "I dis-remember ever seeing anything like it," an old man said to me quite recently. Poor Mrs. Todd could do nothing but cry; a great

temptation had been taken from her husband in a moment—a temptation that was never to return.

The minister and Sir William had a chat over the match that evening.

"Your Precentor seemed annoyed at losing the prize; but he took the box with the whisky all the same."

"Yes," said the minister, "and he smashed the bottles whenever he got home. I was there and saw him do it." And then he told the whole story as he had got it from John Jamieson after much questioning.

The precentor's wedding took place in the last week of May, and the cup, after all, was not missed. For when Mrs. Jamieson sat down at the head of the table to pour out tea for the guests, as is the custom in our part of the country at a wedding feast, when the "cosy" was removed she found a solid silver tea-pot with the inscription on it:

"To John Jamieson on the occasion of his marriage, and appointment as grieve on the estate, from Sir William Spiers, Bart., and Lady Spiers, of Barrochy."

REASONS FOR NOT GOING TO CHURCH. III.

THIS man does not go to church now, because "his Minister passed him by one day without recognizing him."

The Rev. Clement Cruttwell

"Every scribe who hath been made a disciple to the kingdom of heaven is like unto a man that is a householder, which bringeth forth out of his treasure things new and old." —Matt. xv. 32 (R.V.).

I WISH to introduce you to the Rev. Clement Crutwell, whose book *A Concordance of Parallels, Selected from Bibles and Commentaries*, is such a curious looking one that a young man to whom I showed it the other day burst out laughing on his first glance at it, and said, "Oh the Block-head!"

You all know what is meant by a *Bible with References*. References are texts in other parts of the Bible which explain or illustrate the verse or chapter which you are reading, and they are printed sometimes between the columns of the Bible in the middle of the page, sometimes at the side, and sometimes at the foot. School Bibles, as a rule, have no references, but the great big Family Bibles, of which your fathers and mothers are so proud, that lie on the top of the "drawers," almost all have them.

Some Sabbath evening, for example, you are all sitting round the fire, with the cat as usual in the best place. You have repeated two or three questions of the Catechism to your father, and he has explained them to you and shown you how much there is in them that you never noticed about the goodness and love of God. You have

also said two verses of a Psalm, or one verse if you are not very clever; and you have gone over what you remember of the two sermons you heard in church, and your father has explained some things you didn't quite understand. You have also, I hope, done a lot of singing, your father at the *bass* away down, down, and your mother at the *air*, and your two sisters at the *alto*, and your big brother that is so strong away high up at the *tenor*. Then your parents have told you some fine stories, some of them very sad, and some very delightful, about people whom they knew and loved long long ago. And then you have had worship, and have read verses about, say the 11th chapter of Hebrews, "in which every verse is a hero's monument." But it still wants a whole hour to bedtime, and you would like to hear more about Gideon who is just mentioned in the 32nd verse. Get the little stool—perhaps you had better take a chair—and lift the Family Bible down, and opposite that verse you will see the the words, Judges vi., vii. That is the place where you will find the story.

Of course, if you had been a little older you could easily have found that out for yourself. But some night, perhaps, after your father has pointed out to you the constellations of *The Plough* and *Orion*, you wish to find out all that God says about the stars. The French fishermen used to say when they set sail, "Help us, O God, for the sea is so big and our boats are so small," so the Bible is a big book, and we know so little of it and forget so much. It is then you find out the advantage of a Bible *with references*.

Mr. Cruttwell has been standing waiting all this time, but quite patiently, for he knows I haven't forgotten him.

The curious thing about his book, first of all, in this: he doesn't print any of the words of the Bible, but just begins all at once—GENESIS, Chap. I., Verse 1. and then he gives the references, so that you need to keep an open Bible beside you, to tell you what verse 1 says, and then, in time, what verse 2 says, and so on. The whole book, therefore, is just one mass of figures, without a single word in it except the name of each book, as it comes on in turn, Exodus, Leviticus, etc. And that is why the young man laughed and continued laughing for nearly a minute at it. He had never seen a book with nothing in it but figures before, and he had seen many books, *Euclids*, and *Algebras*, and *Interest Tables*, and I don't know all what.

Mr. Cruttwell's book, further, is a very big one, a quarto, of 531 pages, and it is so big because the references he gives are so many. John Brown of Haddington in his *Self-Interpreting Bible*—that is, a Bible which *interprets itself* chiefly by its references—gives eight texts opposite the first verse in Genesis, but Mr. Cruttwell gives 153, and all of them great, worth counting, and worth keeping, like the fishes—"an hundred and fifty and three"—that Peter drew to land. The passages he quotes on that one text would, if printed small, fill a column of the *Morning Watch*. In the whole book, I calculate, there are over 558,000 different references, and over 1,760,000 separate figures.

But that is not all. Many of these references he found out himself, but the most of them, he tells us, were collected "from Bibles and Commentaries which had been published in Hebrew, Latin, French, Italian, Spanish, English, and other languages." He gives a list of fifty-one such books from which he quotes in the Old Testament, and sixty in the New. Besides all that, every text he gives has a mark which shows from which writer he took it. On that first verse of Genesis he quotes from four-and-twenty authors, and that represents not only so much seeking and finding, but even more seeking and *not* finding. Many of the references, he says in his Preface, he himself considered "in a great measure imaginary," and he felt inclined to reject them, but he hardly liked to set himself against "so many great and learned men." You see he did not simply copy them; he verified them and examined them.

The book took him five years to write and print, 1785-1790. It was printed in his own house, at his own expense, and broke his health for a time, and little wonder. He lived to publish several other books, and died in 1808, aged sixty-five. He was originally a surgeon in Bath, but afterwards became a minister in the Church of England.

I do not think his *Concordance of Parallels* can have been commercially a success. The copy I have—kindly lent to me by a Greenock gentleman—is the only one I have ever seen or heard of, and, oddly enough, bears on its first page the signature of my predecessor's predecessor's predecessor

in the ministry in this place! But commercially successful or not, Mr. Cruttwell was no blockhead! and we must not say, Wherefore was this waste? I am convinced he must have loved God much, and what he did deserves to be told for a memorial of him. I hope you will all meet him some day, and it will add both to his joy and yours, when you salute Clement, to tell him, smiling, that you had heard on earth, before you came to heaven, something about him and his big Concordance, and the "laboriousness of his love," and I hope the young man, too, of whom I spoke, will say, also smiling, "And do you know what I, in my haste, once called you?"

Go to Jericho!

"Thou shalt bind this line of scarlet thread in the window which thou didst let us down by."—Joshua ii. 18.

The Misses Plenderleith were neat and orderly in all they did. If they had to go out even for an hour or two they would tidy up their room and put every book and paper away. "We don't know who might be calling or waiting for us when we come back," they would say to one another. On the week of our story they purposed going up to town on Tuesday to buy some things for the party of friends they hoped to entertain on the Thursday. On the Monday they spent four or five hours cutting the grass on the croquet-green in front of their house with their lawn-mower. It was a fairly large green, thirty yards square, and as they were rather elderly and very particular in all they did, that is why they took so long.

"Now if we could just have got a man to roll it for an hour, the green would look lovely, wouldn't it?" Fortunately for them that Monday and Tuesday happened to be school holidays for some reason or other, and so they asked Mrs. Fergus, a young widow of five-and-thirty, if her son Johnnie would be able and willing to roll their lawn for them for an hour or two any time on Tuesday after breakfast, and they would give him sixpence for it, and their cook would give him a plate of broth at mid-day.

Johnnie of course was delighted and was there at nine o'clock, in time to see the ladies and get instructions before they went away.

Working with the roller was great fun to him, and he set off very briskly. But the ground was a little hard and lumpy, and after a time he saw that though it would be harder work to roll more slowly, the work would be done better; the weight of the roller would tell the more.

At 10.25 two slaters, Englishmen, resumed their labours on the roof, and having lighted their pipes, began to watch the little fellow down below. "Doesn't he know how to do it?" one of them said, "We couldn't spin the time out better ourselves. A slower rate of moving I've never seen in my life, barring a snail, unless at a bicycling tournament." But when they quizzed him about it and learned his real reason for what he did, they changed their minds. "He's got a head on him, he has, I tell you, Charlie. No wonder these Scotties become foremen and Prime Ministers."

So they continued watching him, and admiring the neat way he marked off the ground with little twigs every time he turned the roller to come the other way. "Science is measurement, is science; ain't it, Charlie?"

At 11.30 the two men began to long for their beer, if "began" is a proper word to use for that which with them never seemed to end and therefore never needed to begin. It was the hottest day of the season, and lying basking on a house's roof doing nothing is tiring work. Presently it occurred to Charlie that, if only they

had a string long enough, they could let down one of their cans, and send the little youngster to the nearest public-house, which was scarcely half-a-mile away. For such a purpose the ropes they had were too thick and grimy. And they did not wish to come down themselves if they could help it.

So they called to him to go in and ask the cook with their compliments for as much string as would reach to them from the ground—a pretty stoutish bit.

The Misses Plenderleith had a drawer in one of their cupboards in which they kept little bits of string of all kinds neatly wound up, and presently the cook and Johnnie were knotting together some lengths of old red window cord. Then the slaters lowered a rope, and after hauling up the cord lowered it again with the tin-pitcher fastened to it and 3½d. inside. "Fetch us 2½d. worth of beer, and there's a penny to yourself, and if the man asks how old you are, tell him you've come to years of discretion—anything from fourteen up to one-and-twenty. And look smart, gardener; mind, it's not a roller you're trundling this time; we'll leave this red cord hanging till you come back; and do the best you can for us."

And Johnnie said, "I will." For, while he was thinking what to do and what to say to them—he had never been inside a public-house door in his life, his mother having taught him that it was both a sin and a disgrace even to be seen entering a public-house, no matter what one's errand was—the ringing of the milkman's bell

showed him his way, showed him *the* way, out of the temptation.

"Twopence ha'penny worth of milk, please, and as good as you can give it me. It's for two slaters on Miss Plenderleith's roof along there."

"I'm thinking," said the young farmer, a very decent lad, "I'm thinking it wasn't this sort of stuff they sent you for, but we must do our very best for them"; and with that he gave Johnnie not only good measure but a little cream extra into it.

Then Johnnie came back, and having tied the penny in a piece of paper and fastened it and the pitcher to the cord, gave the signal, "Haul away," and ran off to his work at the roller.

And weren't the two men angry when they saw how they were sold! but in a little, being merry Englishmen, they laughed, and then they drank the milk, and called it good, and lowered Johnnie's share, and asked him the why and wherefore of all this. And Johnnie told them what his mother taught him, and added further that it would have been a dreadful thing to use a red cord for sending up drink with, the very kind of cord that they read about in the Bible about the walls of Jericho.

But the Englishmen had never heard of Jericho in that connection, and as they didn't know where to find the story, they got the cook to read it to them. They were a little unwilling at first to listen, but when she pointed out to them that they might well hear a chapter read seeing they got elevenpence an hour for it, they agreed to submit, though they thought that for such

extra hard work their pay should be at the rate of time-and-a-half at the very least.

But they never forgot the story and they told it to their mates, so that for many a day, whenever one of them proposed to adjourn for a drink, or send for one, it was enough to say—"Now, look here! you go to Jericho!"

The Useless Tacks

The Randlesons, father, mother and two boys, lived in a two-roomed cottage two hundred yards from the sea-shore. The rooms were small and Mrs. Randleson sorely grudged the space taken up in winter time by her tubs and her husband's garden tools. She often spoke of the little toolhouse, five feet by three, that her father had made, but wages were small, and boys were hungry, and wood was dear. The people on the other side of the loch, six miles off, had more wood than they could use, the west winds urged it to them, but her chance came only when the wind blew straight from the north, and that was but five or six days in the year. Then would come a few shavings, some corks for fishermen's nets, an occasional wedge, or the branch of a tree. Once they found a ten-foot yellow pine plank and were happy for weeks. It lay at the end of the house, and every time they looked at it they were filled with wonder and gratitude and hope. It was Mr. Randleson who dragged it up one wintry morning in the dark. He laid it quietly down, and and then came into the house without a word. But as soon as it was light, just as they were sitting down to porridge, "Take my arm, Mary," he said, and then leading the way, the boys following, not without fear, he led her to the end of the house where the plank lay. The boys never forgot that moment. Oh, but it was a great

day! A ten-foot plank, and yet some people said that life was not worth living!

The whole household, singly and jointly, often went and looked at it, and came away comforted.

"If only we could get one or two more, even though they were but half the size——" but it was evidently not to be.

When Mrs. Randleson went away one Monday in September to see her ailing father, all things seemed to be as they had been for many a day. But that night a north wind blew, and in the morning her husband saw something the moment he opened the door.

"Get up, boys, and put on your clothes, and follow me."

He waited till they were ready, and then with a solemn face, led the way. "Who'll be first down?" he cried.

That was another moment the boys never forgot. He used to outrun them easily when they tried races, but this morning he took care to let them beat him. It was a day he wished to be remembered.

One, two, three, four, five, six, eight, ten—ten long clean boards, a half-inch thick, twelve inches broad, and the shortest of them twelve feet long, thrown overboard to clear the deck of a Canadian cattle-ship, were lying high and dry upon the beach.

Oh, but it was great! And how the little fellows puffed and blew and took off their jackets and hauled! Then, when the last board had been carried up, "Can it be done before Mother's back?" he asked, and the boys answered the

question by gripping their father's legs and wrestling with him. Oh, but it was great!

It was the last week of the school holidays, and the boys were free, but their father, a roadman, had to go to work. His wife was one of those women who never throw anything away—" Keep a thing for seven years and you'll find a use for it " was a proverb often in her mouth—and he knew that for years she had been gathering nails against the day when a tool-shed should be made.

" Get all the nails and tacks you can, big and little," he said, " and we'll plan things out when I come home at night. But don't meddle with the planks till then. They're heavy and you might hurt yourselves, and we'll need all the strength and time we have if the house is to be ready by Friday."

" Science is measurement," and measuring was the greater part of the first night's work, but they did some sawing too. In the morning he got four of the eight uprights in. On the Wednesday night the roof was on, with eaves projecting a foot on each of its three sides. He always liked broad eaves to a house; it gave it, he thought, a cosy look. On Thursday, the sides and front were boarded, all but a space of eight inches under the eaves right round. That would let in light and air, and the eaves would keep out the rain. He had heard his minister say there was an opening like that right round the Ark. And, of course, there was a space two-and-a-half feet wide in the middle to go in and out by. If he had had a hinge he would have made a door, but that could wait.

Then, to protect the roof in winter—a very necessary thing—" Boys, where are the strips of old waxcloth that your mother found one day ? " They had been thrown out of a yacht.

" Here they are ! "

" The very thing ! and there will be enough with some patching to do the whole roof."

That was the early morning's work on Friday, and it was then they had the adventure of the " useless tacks." The tacks were kept in an old matchbox, and as there seemed to be more than they would need their father used the best ones first, then those that were shorter or blunter that had been previously rejected.

In the Randleson's house the Bible was quoted on all occasions, but, of course, with reverence, and not in jest. It and *Pilgrim's Progress*, and *The Scots Worthies*, and *The Cloud of Witnesses*, and *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*, and *Robinson Crusoe*, and, of course, *The Shorter Catechism*, were almost the only books they had, and they knew them so well that they thought in them, and everything that happened suggested something in them. When their father, therefore, was finishing the covering of the roof, and knew that the tacks were about done, he said, " Another tack," and then the story of Elisha and the widow's cruse of oil came into his head, and he said, smiling, " Bring me yet a tack." To this the elder of his boys answered, " There is not a tack more."

" I need only two to keep this corner down, but I need them, and we must get them somehow."

When he began to use the tacks that morning

there were two with bent points, like the letter J, that seemed to come to his hand in a very provoking way every time he put his finger in the box, and being in a hurry, for he had to be at his work at half-past six, he got a little cross with them and at last took them out and laid them aside, saying, "Now, don't you torment me any more!"

"Are you sure there are no more in any of the drawers?"

"No, father: but could we not use the bent ones?"

"All right, but you'll have to straighten them first."

And straighten them the little fellows did, but at some cost, for in their haste they both, first one, then the other, struck their thumbs so badly with the hammer that if one had cried the other would have cried too.

"Your thumbs will be black before long," said their father, "and I'm not sorry, and I'll tell you why, if you come along the road with me.

"There was an Italian scupltor called Benvenuto Cellini—Benvenuto means Welcome—who lived about four hundred years ago, and when he was a little boy he and his father were sitting one day cold beside an oak-wood fire—his father was singing and playing the fiddle—when they saw—or imagined they saw—a little creature like a lizard running about and playing in the middle of the flame. 'Look at that,' he said, giving the boy a hard box on the ear. Whereupon Benvenuto fell a-crying.

"'My dear child,' said his father, 'I didn't give you that blow for any fault you have committed, but that you might recollect as long as you live that you have seen a *Salamander*, such an one as never was beheld before to my knowledge!' So, boys, I'm glad you've hurt your thumbs. These two tacks gained their point—more ways than one—by *being on the spot.* I put them aside as being in the way, yet the time came when we were glad to have them. Mind that; a bent nail that's at hand, that's *on the spot*, is worth more than the straightest one in the world that is half a mile away. Your sore thumbs will perhaps help you to mind it better! Now run away back, and each of you put in a nail."

But the boys agreed between themselves to let their Mother drive them in, and then she could say she had helped to build the house.

Mr. Randleson came back at two, having asked and readily obtained a half-holiday. He had had no holiday that year. He brought with him, too, a big pot of green paint, a present from the wheelwright. By four o'clock the shed was finished, all but the two nails, and all three went off to meet the coach that was to bring their Mother home. And not one word was to be said to her about what they had been doing. The shed, being at the back of the house where no windows were, could not be seen till one went round to it. That was to be a surprise for her after tea.

One needn't try to hide anything from a woman, and Mrs. Randleson would have seen in any case, the moment she met her husband and

her boys, that there was something in the air. His preternatural solemnity and their excited faces, to say nothing of the sawdust on their clothes and the smell of paint, all told a tale. In ordinary circumstances she would have shown them her suspicions, but, happily, she had been warned, and was, of course, prepared to respect their secret till their own time of telling it should come. The driver of the coach had told her there had been great hammerings and on-goings all the week, though he couldn't see what it was her husband had been doing. But the road-surveyor, who travelled part of the way, could tell her more, and her own imagination, and her knowledge of her husband's love, supplied the rest.

Their meeting was, of course, a happy one, though perhaps a little formal-looking. One of the boys took her box, the other the ham which her father had sent for their Sabbath breakfasts. The bag with cabbage leaves on the top she entrusted to her husband. It was full of apples for the boys, she whispered to him, and was a little surprise she had prepared for them. "People," she said, "like to be surprised; she could remember the time when she got little surprises herself, but these days were past. But she hoped he had been doing something to the garden while she was away."

"Ah, well," she said, when she came in and looked at the house, "I can see it was time I was back. I must begin to redd things up a bit as soon as I have had a cup of tea. But is it not a terrible thing to be married to a lazy man and to be the mother of two lazy boys?" They sat

down to tea, and their father asked a blessing, but the boys couldn't eat, and at last Mr. Randleson said, "Mary!" and gave her his arm, and led her out through the door, the boys leaping in front of them, and round to the back, and there——!

Mrs. Randleson was expecting a little shed, no bigger than her father's, and was prepared to affect a proportionate surprise, but a shed twelve feet long, with a waterproof roof and painted green!—her surprise was more genuine than she was prepared for; the one half had not been told her.

"And you are to put in the last two tacks, Mother," the boys cried.

* * * *

"That looks a big cabbage your father sent us," said Mr. Randleson, when tea was over. "May I look at it?"

"Oh, it's apples! it's apples!" Then, when they had counted them—and there were five dozen—"Oh, Mother! you've played a trick on us."

"Yes, but *nothing*, NOTHING like the trick you played on me."

And they began to be merry.

Fifteen years afterwards the two boys were in a big city when trade was bad and no work was to be got.

It was a Friday afternoon and they were standing looking over a wall where some engineering work was being done. "Should we not go away? There's no chance of work to-day," said the younger.

"I think we may as well wait on," said the other, "we have no time to go elsewhere. They might need an extra man at the last moment."

And that was just what happened!

"Are you willing to come in for an hour?" a foreman cried. And their answer was so ready, and their work so hearty, and there was something so lovable about them, that the foreman said, "Come to-morrow at six."

"That comes of being *on the spot*, Bill, as father used to say. Isn't it fine? Do you remember the tool-house and the salamander?"

"Don't I? But I thought you had forgotten, and I was just going to punch your head like little Benvenuto's father. That was a great day, John, wasn't it? Do you remember Mother's face?"

REASONS FOR NOT GOING TO CHURCH. IV.

THIS woman, who is looking if the showers have brought up any of her Annuals, has not gone to Church for three Sabbaths because her umbrella is broken. N.B.—The distance from her front door-step to the Church porch is exactly thirty-six yards.

Phemie Todd's Sucker

Isn't it an odd thing that what we call a "game" consists in trying to overcome a difficulty which we ourselves have made? There is nothing to hinder a little girl from walking or jumping or simply sitting still. These are easy things to do. But she gets a rope and other two girls to hold it and swing it over her head and under her feet on the pavement, and she calls that "playing at the skipping-ropes." Then they get another rope and make it twice as hard, or other girls come and they play at "leads"—which I think as pretty a game to watch as I know—and they try to puzzle one another and to make things as difficult as they can. So, too, with boys. They set up three wickets which they could quite easily knock down if they wished, but they stand twenty-two yards off and aim at them, and as if that weren't hard enough they give another boy a big broad bat to protect the wickets! Grown-up men play at bowls, and what is to hinder them from carrying as many bowls in their hands as they choose, and placing them carefully all round the "jack"? But they go away back, or send the jack away forward, and get bowls which won't run straight, and then try to knock one another out, or lie in front of one another's way. That is to say, they create as many difficulties as they can, and call it good fun to try and overcome them.

Phemie Todd's Sucker

Look at Phemie Todd. There was nothing to prevent her from going straight home from school. But she gets a piece of leather with a string through the middle of it, and wets it, and presses it on the ground and then tries to pull it away, and the firmer it holds the more pleased she is. When it comes away, she wets it and presses it down again, and again!

May we not say that *work*, on the other hand, consists in overcoming difficulties which God has put in our way? If we believed in His love, and in His promises, might not the overcoming of *His* difficulties be as great a pleasure to us as the overcoming of *our own?* Might not all work be a form of play, with God for our Companion?

Phemie Todd got a fright the other day. Her "sucker" held so firmly that she could not pull it away, and I had to do it for her. She thought she would have to leave it; her very success in doing what she wanted to do was the worst failure she could have made! She had got hold of a prisoner, like the man in the Peninsular War, who wouldn't let her go; or like Carlyle's mother's friend, who didn't know where to hide her twenty shilling-pieces, she might have said, "They have trouble that *have* the world, as much as they that *haven't* it."

You know what makes the sucker cling to the stone? Don't say it is suction, for the word suction means nothing. There is no such thing.

Air has a certain weight. On every square inch of anything on the earth's surface there is a pressure of fifteen pounds. Every grown-up man carries a load of nearly fifteen tons of air.

That is one of our " unconscious burdens." We do not feel it, because the pressure is the same in all directions, and the air permeates our bodies. When a sucker, therefore, is pressed on a stone, and the string pulled, there is formed a *vacuum* between the centre of the leather and the stone, that is, there is a space in which there is no air, but the air outside presses down the leather on the stone and keeps the two from separating. In the same way we sometimes find it difficult to lift an ornament off a smooth mantel shelf and we say there has been something sticky on it. But it is not that. It is because the bottom of the ornament and the top of the marble are so smooth that no air can get in between them, and the air above and outside them pressed them together. The feet of many insects are made on this principle. They walk with their heads downwards, because, like Phemie Todd, they have suckers to play with. O Lord, how manifold are thy works ! in wisdom hast Thou made them all ; the earth is full of Thy riches.

"The Off-putter"

MR. EDGERFIELD is one of the kindest and cleverest of men, but he is always late. He dawdles at the beginning, and is in a fearful hurry at the end, with everything. One third of his life is spent in resolving to do better this time, and another third in regretting that he hasn't, and the intervening third is the place where the other two thirds meet. In business circles he is known as *The Off-putter*. "I don't know a nicer or more obliging fellow," you may hear people saying, "but you can't rely on him." He will sit up all night doing a thing that should have been finished yesterday; he will hand it in at your house before you are out of bed in the morning, and he will almost cry when you tell him to-morrow that his delay lost you a big contract. Ay, and the vexing thing is that by sitting up in vain to oblige you he lost another contract for another man, so that he missed two birds with one stone! And he can sling stones at an hair-breadth when he chooses, and not miss.

It is all due to his upbringing. A writer in Bible times would have said concerning him—"And the rest of his acts and the things that he did, and the things that he didn't do, because he was too late in doing them, are they not written in the Book of the Chronicles? *And his mother's name was*——"

His mother was what we call a soft, good-natured woman; of the kind we describe as

"easy-osy." (Take notice that I do not stake my reputation for spelling on that last word!) Her great word was "directly." "I'll be there directly," she would say. Now directly means straightway, and straightway means the shortest line between any two points. But when people found that with Mrs. Edgerfield "directly" meant, say, five-and-twenty minutes, they said "According to Euclid even two straight lines cannot enclose a space, but here is a woman who can make *one* enclose a very considerable space."

Little Freddie was his mother's very image, a most lovable, and yet a most provoking boy.

When he was called at seven in the morning, and he had always to be called twice at least, he would answer—"All right, I'm just going to get up," but it would be 7.30 before he was out of bed. By 7.50 he would be washed and half-dressed, one brace fastened and one shoe on. While this was only half-laced he would spy his knife lying under a chair, and he must pick it up, and open all the blades in turn. Then he would sharpen a pencil, or work for five minutes at the little boat he had begun to make two weeks before. Presently he could hear the clatter of a horse's hoofs, and he must look out through the window. It was no ordinary morning if there was not something else near, or far off, to catch his eye. Then, after a little while, he would fasten his other brace, and having done that, begin to wonder where his top or his peerie was. It was a marvel if, while hunting for it, though hunting is not the word for his leisurely search, he did not come across a foreign postage

stamp that he had been looking for three weeks before. Then he would set off on another tack. And so on, and so on, till it was ten minutes past nine. He was due at school, half-a-mile off, at 9.30, and in those twenty minutes he had to begin breakfast, and finish his toilet, or rather have it finished for him. At the last moment, while his mother was looking for his tie, his sister would be scouring the house for his geography book, and his elder brother hurriedly writing out in ink for him the sum in compound long division that had been left overnight upon his slate. And so, sans tie, sans top, sans "piece," sans book, sans everything, not creeping like snail, but galloping like a hare, yet none the less unwillingly, would he go to school. "Oh, Freddy, Freddy," his master often said, "you'll be half an hour late with everything all your days." His master was right. As it was in the beginning of his life, so it is now, and so I fear it will will be to the end. But it was his mother's fault to start with.

Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, DO IT WITH THY MIGHT; for there is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom in the grave, whither thou goest.

Brigadier-General John Nicholson

At Delhi, on New Year's Day, 1877, the Queen was proclaimed Empress of India. The Durbar gathering, on that occasion, was one of the most wonderful sights the world has ever seen. There were British heroes there whose names are household words; a multitude of Indian princes, many of them wearing crowns, and all blazing with countless diamonds; rows upon rows of elephants—one row had over two hundred—each having its head and trunk painted; many of them with silver anklets and trappings of solid gold; while some had even played a part in history. Letters written at the time say that the salvoes of artillery were "grand"—so grand that two natives were killed by the bolting of some elephants. I barely remember, however, the firing of the guns, but I often think of the sweet music the four English and four native heralds made with their silver trumpets. It reminded me then, as it does still, of Bunyan's description of Christian's and Hopeful's ascent to the gates of the Celestial City: "There came out to meet them several of the King's trumpeters, clothed in white and shining raiment, who, with melodious noises and loud, made even the heavens to echo with their sound."

And I still think I hear the reading of the Proclamation by Major Barnes. He was chosen for the task, not only for his gigantic stature—he

was six feet six inches in height—but for his voice, which was believed to carry further than that of any other man in India. Every word rang over the plain, but how can I describe the mighty and, it almost seemed, unearthly cry with which he uttered the last two words :

"VIVAT IMPERATRIX."

"Let the Empress live for ever."

Yet the events and scenes of that New Year's Day were paltry compared with what Delhi had witnessed during the Mutiny twenty years before.

My favourite haunt, during the eight days I spent at Delhi, was the Cashmere Gate. On a slab beside it are recorded the names of six "mighty men": Lieutenants Horne and Salkeid, Sergeants Carmichael, Burgess and Smith, and Bugler Hawthorne. For it was they who, the morning of that ever memorable 20th of September, 1857, when Delhi fell, carried and laid down and kindled the powder bags that blew down the Cashmere Gate. Horne laid the first bag, Carmichael, coming forward with the second, was shot dead by the Sepoys on the wall, but Smith, taking the bag up, placed it, and also his own, in position : Salkeid, with the slow-match in his hand, was struck down as he was lighting it, but, falling, handed it to Burgess who, falling likewise, handed it to Smith ; Smith lighted it, there was a roar and a crash ; the gate was shattered, the bugles sounded, and the assaulting columns came rushing on.

Burgess died in a few minutes, Salkeid in a few days ; Smith, Hawthorne and Horne escaped, the

last only to be killed sixteen days after by the premature springing of a mine.

There was one other spot I loved to go to—the grave of Brigadier-General Nicholson. It was he who commanded the assaulting force, himself leading the first column that day. He fell a few hours after, as he was leading a body of volunteers on a desperate enterprise through a narrow street whose windows and flat roofs bristled with riflemen.

Eleven hundred out of the three thousand fell that day, but the greatest of them all was John Nicholson. He lingered for nine days and then died.

He was only thirty-five, but was already famous all over India. There his memory is still green. One had no difficulty, I remember, in finding his grave in the English cemetery; there was a beaten path straight to it.

He was born in Dublin in 1822, the eldest son of a doctor, who died eight years afterwards of fever caught on duty.

He was but little over sixteen when he set sail for India. His mother's last words to him were: "Never forget to read your Bible," and he obeyed her faithfully. His career was unusually chequered but ever more and more brilliant. I am sorry I have not space to tell you of his feats of arms. From the beginning he was worth, as Lord Lawrence said at the time, the wing of a reginemt. Yet he was not without his faults; obstinate, imperious, and haughty in his manner, men did not take to him at first, but once they knew him, their love and reverence had

no bounds. His stature, his noble bearing, his sonorous voice, his promptness in action made a lasting impression on the native mind. The first words visitors to the battlefields of Goojerat and Chillianwallah used to hear from the country people were: "Nikkul Seyn stood just there." There was a brotherhood of Fakirs, too, who literally worshipped him; he flogged them for it, but they only adored him more. When news reached them of his death, two of them killed themselves; a third, says Mr. Bosworth Smith, "with truer instinct resolved thenceforward to worship nothing but the God whom Nikkul Seyn had served."

The natives on the north-west frontier think they still hear the ringing of his horses' hoofs at night; so long as that sound is heard they feel that India belongs to Britain.

When the Mutiny broke out in May, 1857, Nicholson was at Peshawar. "If there is ever a desperate deed to be done in India," a famous officer had said a short time before, to Lord Canning, the Governor-General, "Nicholson is the man to do it."

I have but room, however, for one little incident that occurred during the march of the famous movable column to Delhi. I take it from "The Life of Lord Lawrence."

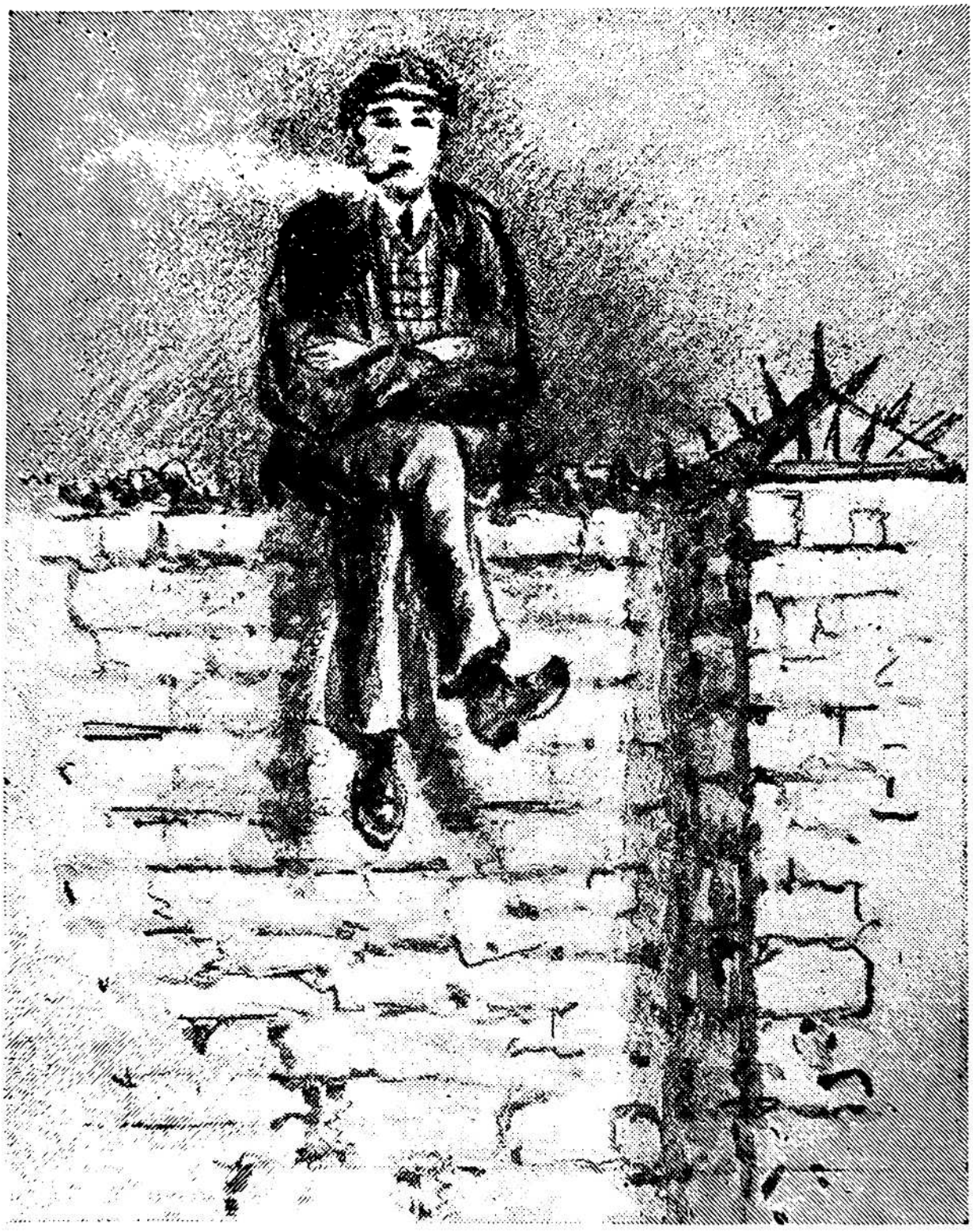
When the sun was at its fiercest, and men were falling exhausted or dead, the column neared a grove of trees. Some of the officers, seeing the sad plight the men were in, proposed to halt an hour or two. "No," sternly answered Nicholson, "we must press on." But he yielded to more

urgent expostulation; and in a moment the worn-out men were asleep beneath the trees. After an interval, it occurred to one of them, as he awoke from sleep, to ask where the General was. Not seeing him among the sleepers on the ground, he looked back to the road which they had left, and there, sitting bold upright on his horse, and perfectly motionless, he saw John Nicholson waiting as, unknown to them all, he had been waiting from the beginning, with impatient patience, till his men should have had their rest.

Is not that just like God? He giveth His beloved sleep, but

> "He that keeps Israel,
> He slumbers not nor sleeps."

REASONS FOR NOT GOING TO CHURCH. V.



THIS man, who is watching a football match two fields off, does not go to Church, he says, because there is no footstool in his seat, and he can't do without one.

Who is my Neighbour?

A NEIGHBOUR is a person to whom we do a neighbourly turn. So our Lord tells us in the story of the Good Samaritan. He may live next door to us, or across the street, or a mile or 12,000 miles away; it doesn't matter. We make him *our* neighbour by showing ourselves *his* neighbour.

The young English doctor, of whom I am to tell you, had for his nearest neighbours two elderly maiden ladies and their bachelor brother. And very disagreeable neighbours they were. The two houses were but eighty yards apart, a public road separating them, but there were no comings or goings between them. The Crooms, for that was their name, had had their disappointments, like every other body, but their sorrows had done them no good and had only left them bitter. They had something bad to say about everybody, the doctor and his young wife and their little daughter, and his two maids and his visitors included. They had few visitors of their own, and as they had nothing to do, and had as much money as kept them comfortable, they were very, very miserable.

The doctor and his household did them as many kind turns as they could, notably the month of the great rain when the burn overflowed and the drains were choked, but the Crooms gave them no thanks and only suspected and disliked them

the more. Their greatest happiness consisted in telling people, who came to their door asking if Doctor So-and-So lived there, that they knew nothing about him.

The doctor and his wife got to know this, of course, but they only pitied them the more, and hoped for some new chance to do them a kindness. For example. The Crooms had a dog which had learnt their snarling ways, and was consequently an object of great interest to all message boys, who laid in stores of the biggest stones they could find whenever they were to pass that way. One day, one of them, affecting to flee in terror before it, led the dog into an ambush where three other boys were hiding, and between them the poor dog got a sore mauling. The doctor coming up at the time, rescued it, took it into his house, getting one or two bites for his pains, washed and bandaged its leg, gave it a bone, and then let it go. Ever after the dog wagged its tail whenever it saw the doctor's little daughter, though the Misses Croom would say—" Ssss, bark at her, Nero!"

One day to their great indignation the little girl herself was seen coming up to their door with three apples in her hands. Her father and mother had taken care never to say anything unkind about their neighbours in their daughter's hearing, though now and again she had heard them say they were sorry for them, they were so lonely, and had such marks of suffering on their faces. It was little Ruth's birthday, and her parents had let her pull the three apples that grew on their solitary apple tree. They had

bargained for nineteen or twenty when they saw the blossom in spring, but the season had been adverse. Ruth was to do with them what she chose, and as she had been brought up in the royal way, that is, with the notion that a birthday was one for giving even more than for getting kindnesses her parents had wondered how she would dispose of them.

It was to the Crooms she took them, and very sweet and happy the little creature looked as she went up the little avenue to their door. "If you please," she said, "this is my birthday, and I am five, and I will be six next birthday, and I brought you three apples as a birthday gift, and will you come some day and have a swing on my swing in the tree, and see pussy?"

"We don't need any apples," was the answer, "we have more than we know what to do with"—which was true, for they couldn't eat them all themselves, and they never gave any away. It would only encourage boys to steal, they said.

They shut the door, not very graciously—and it is wonderful how graciously and tenderly a door can be shut as well as opened—and little Ruth turned homewards, perplexed even more than disappointed. "Forward child," was what the ladies said; "just came, sent by her mother, to see what she could get; there are too many like her." Then they watched her and saw her give the apples to two little girls who were passing, whose mouths had fallen open with admiration and a little touch of envy at the sight of her. "Won't her mother be the angry woman," the old ladies said, "when she finds her coming home

with nothing, and she would be looking for a shilling at the very least."

One day, the winter after, a parcel for the Crooms was left by mistake at the doctor's door. There had been a heavy fall of snow for almost four-and-twenty hours, and the doctor, as was his duty, to save his maids, put on the boots he had taken off fifteen minutes before, and carried the parcel himself, with a note attached: "Left a little ago by mistake at Dr. So-and-So's door." As he went up their avenue they saw him from their window and drew back, wondering what this new move of their disagreeable neighbour meant, and hoping he had not seen them. The doctor, having rung the bell, laid the parcel in the little porch and went down the path again.

By this time they had recovered their wits, for ill-doing people are always being taken aback, and determined to show the doctor how little they were interested either in him or in his movements. "Ay," said he to his wife afterwards, "I was never sorrier for them: their ostentatious indifference was a thing to make any one almost cry. One of them began to sing—she must have been a very beautiful singer when she was young—and another hurriedly threw out bread for the gulls. It was very touching."

Meantime, as the doctor went down the path, the ladies and their brother noticed that he halted suddenly and appeared greatly interested in something. He came back two or three yards, halted again, and then went very slowly to the gate.

"Just like his impudence," they said, and they

each began to imagine what evil design the doctor was after now.

When he reached the house, before he sat down, he said to his wife, "Do you know, we have both been very thoughtless and selfish. That chestnut tree at the end of our house must shut out the whole view of the firth from the Crooms during summer. Even to-day, bare as the branches are, you could hardly see from their door that barque that passed up a minute ago. I wonder the possibility of that never occurred to us before. We have been blocking up their view all these years. We must cut that tree down."

Now, the doctor, being a man of sense, knew that it was a solemn thing to cut down a tree. For a tree represents so much patience and wisdom and love on the part of God. And it means so much to the birds that sing with delectation among the branches. "There are 896,231 birds sleeping in that tree every night," Sir Edward Burne-Jones, the great painter, said to Mr. Gladstone once with characteristic accurate inaccuracy. "How many did you say?" was Mr. Gladstone's answer. There certainly weren't quite as many as that in the chestnut, but, if we knew everything, counting birds and insects, perhaps there were even more! "And what about Ruth's swing?" said her mother. "Oh, she can make that her New Year's gift to the old ladies, and we'll rig up another for her some other place!"

Eight days after, the Crooms saw men cutting down the tree. But what evil design the doctor had in it—and they were sure he must have some

one—they could not make out. So intent were they looking at the tree that they forgot to look beyond it, and it was only next morning, when they saw a pretty Norwegian schooner pass up the firth, that they discovered that the cutting down of the tree had opened up for them five miles of view! Wouldn't that creature and his wife be mad if they knew the good turn they had done us!" But what the doctor said was this:—"These people over there seem so taken up with the view—they are all at the window from morning to night—that I blush every time I pass. We have been keeping them all these years from so much that was their own."

And do you know, the disappearance of that tree let in even more light than the doctor knew, for it opened up heaven as well as earth and sea to the Crooms, and in less than six months a great fear began to come on them—the fear that they were altogether wrong in their way of looking at things, and that they had been judging not only their neighbours and everybody else, but even God Himself, unfairly! And one of the old ladies was caught one day dressing a doll, but she wouldn't say whom it was for, but her sister, who was dressing one too, on the sly, suspected it was for a little girl who would be six on her next birthday! And Mr. Croom, too, had a pair of skipping ropes with red handles and bells on them hidden carefully away in an old tool chest, and his sisters, who examined them, came severally to the conclusion that the ropes were not for either of them. And for once, the suspicions of all three were completely justified!

Twenty Strokes

"So fight I."—1 Cor. ix. 26.

MANY years ago in the annual boat-race on the Thames between the two great English Universities—the course is four-and-a-half miles long—the Cambridge crew, whom everybody expected to win, led until about a quarter of a mile from the finish. "As we came into the straight bit of the river, amid a perfectly deafening toot-toot-tooting from the steamers, which nearly cracked the drums of our ears," says Mr. Ernest Roxburgh Balfour, who was rowing number Five from the bow in the Oxford boat, "we quickened our stroke, and *very* gradually began to lessen the gap between us, until, as we shot Barnes Bridge, they were not more than a good three-quarters of a length ahead of us. Well! I had heard that only once before had the boat which was behind at Barnes passed the winning-post first, so I thought that if we were going to win this race we had better begin very soon to put on a spurt.

"And now began a tremendous struggle. We were blown, but still felt that we had a lot more left in us, and Cambridge had been going for all they were worth for the last mile; and now Gold quickened the stroke, and we were quite fit enough to back him up well. We raised the stroke to thirty-seven," (that means, to the rate of thirty-seven strokes in a minute) "and I could

just hear our cox " (that is the man who steers the boat, chosen always for his lightness and his nerve) " say above the awful yelling and cheering along the banks and everywhere, that we were coming up fast. We kept up the fast stroke, and presently we heard our bow, De Knoop, scream, 'I can see their stern,' next Three yelled out the same, and in a few strokes I could see it myself. Then our cox, who all through had steered magnificently, screamed, 'Now, as hard as you can—twenty strokes!' and we proceeded to 'dig them in'; and Cambridge simply seemed to stand still, while in twenty strokes we had passed them, and were half a length ahead.

" For the last minutes we had come into the most awful rough water, and great big waves were breaking into the boat threatening to swamp her, and our cox adjured us to 'feather high,' as we might hit our oars on a wave while coming forward and 'catch crabs'. We struggled on to the finish after this, still keeping our lead, and in another three or four hundred yards we had passed the winning-post two-fifths of a length ahead."

Mr. Balfour, from one of whose letters I have been quoting, rowed again as No. 5 in the crew of 1897, " perhaps the very best university crew that has ever been," and a month or two afterwards was one of the winners of the Silver Goblets prize for pair oars at Henley Regatta. In the middle of August, while shooting in Perthshire, he caught a chill, and two weeks afterwards he died of pneumonia. One of his last conscious acts was to join in singing " O God of Bethel."

Besides being a great oarsman, he was a fine football player, captaining the Rugby team of his university in 1895-6. He was a remarkably handsome lad, 6 feet 2½ inches high, with a very sweet and winning face, and as good as he was handsome, for he feared God above many. After reading his life, one does not wonder that men who met him spoke of him as about the finest young fellow they had ever seen.

He was scarcely twenty-three when he died, but I hope he will live in the memories of those who read this as he does in the hearts of all who ever knew him.

When you are fighting with temptation, or with any other difficulty, I hope you will hear that cry ringing in your ears: "Now as hard as you can—TWENTY STROKES."

The Hyacinth and the Parsley Fern

"I AM growing so high, I can see over the wall at the foot of the garden, I can actually see the hills at the head of the Gareloch."

It was a blue hyacinth that spoke, and it certainly did look wondrous tall, quite a foot-and-a half high, with a great cluster of curling bells on its graceful head. It was growing with a number of others in a little corner of a rock garden, and it did make one wonder why they should grow so much taller there than in their native woodland.

"Did I hear you say you could see hills?" asked an eager voice coming from the depths between two pieces of rock. "Oh, how I wish I too were tall, I am dying to look on a mountain."

"And who, may I ask, is speaking?" said the hyacinth, looking this way and that way, and wondering much who was expressing so strange a wish. "Are you animal, mineral, or vegetable?"

"I am a parsley fern," answered the voice, "and if you would only kindly remove some of your green leaves I should be exceedingly obliged, for I am suffocating for want of air. To think that I, who grew at a height of 6,000 feet and looked on a range of mountain peaks 12,000 feet high, should be doomed to pass my days in a gloomy hole like this! I might as well be in a graveyard. Oh for a breath of cold, fresh air!"

"Well, you need not be so down-hearted," said the tall hyacinth. "There are hills not far off, and the beautiful river Clyde is close beside us. Cheer up, and grow, and you'll see them yet. I'll try to make a little more room for you, and if you will tell us some of your experiences, we shall all be interested, I know, for we have none. We have never been out of this garden, so far as I remember. Where did you come from?"

The fern, gratified by the request paid to it, said, "I was brought from Switzerland. I grew on a mountain close beside the Rhone Glacier and——"

"Wait a bit," interrupted the hyacinth, "you mustn't go on so fast. Beside what? and what is Switzerland?"

"Switzerland is a country with very high mountains, whose tops are always covered with snow. And a glacier is just like a frozen river, winding down a mountain side to a valley. Of course it is not smooth. The ice stands up in blocks and spires thirty feet high, and there are huge cracks; one can look down one hundred feet and hear the water rushing at the bottom."

"And the Rhone?"

"The Rhone is a river. It rushes out of a cave of blue ice at the foot of the glacier, fed by the melting snows, and foams down the valley, through the lake of Geneva, and on, on, through France, till it reaches the Gulf of Lyons, five hundred miles away."

The hyacinth looked impressed.

"I fancy that beats your Clyde," said the fern, and they could not deny it.

"And how did you come here?"

"Oh, two tourists who were climbing our mountain passed us one day, and one of them cried out, 'Holloa! look at the parsley ferns. I'll take one home to Scotland.' So he grubbed me up with his penknife and carried me here in a little tin box, and I feel pretty sick about it all, I can tell you."

The young hyacinth who rather resented the fern's disparaging remarks about their home, and who was not altogether inclined to believe that everything was so delightful in that far-away land, said, "Surely, it must have been awfully cold?"

"No, not in summer, and in winter there are sixteen feet of snow over us, and we didn't feel the cold a bit."

"That was more like a graveyard than our rockery," said the young hyacinth, "and please may I ask how you know all this? I guess you weren't able to jump about and look down the ice-cracks."

"No, it was my old friend the marmot who used to tell me all about the avalanches, and the glaciers, and the poor people who lived in the valley and who worked so hard in their short summer to lay up a little food for the long winter. They were always trying to catch him, but he was a wise old thing, and kept out of their way. He, too, slept all winter under the snow, for no creature could stand the cold. The entrance to his burrow was close beside where I grew, and many a chat we had as he passed out and in."

"It is the birds that bring us all our news,"

said the hyacinth. "I assure you they can carry a matter. They could tell you what the master of the garden had to breakfast this morning."

"Indeed? I must say," said the fern, "I like your birds. We have no such song-birds in Switzerland. What is the name of that one with the speckled breast that sings morning and evening on the topmost branch of this tree above us?"

"A mavis; and the black one with the yellow bill is a blackbird, or a merle. He told me that is his French name. And there is a robin, and a willow-wren, that live with their families in the garden, and sing to one's heart's content, and I wouldn't exchange them for a hundred glaciers," snapped the young hyacinth.

"Well, a hundred might make things uncomfortably cold even in summer, but at any rate, Miss Scornful, we had clear fresh air, and none of this endless, sopping rain, and these grey skies, and——"

"Oh! but the rain makes the bonnie green grass, and the rainbows, and the beautiful lights and shades on the clouds, and——"

They were getting so excited they could not get their words out, when an old crow flew past. He had been listening, for the rookery was close by. "Craw! craw!" he said, "don't be silly. There is beauty and joy and love in every land, and whatever we lack that is good in our own we should admire all the more in other lands. Craw! Craw! Craw!"

REASONS FOR NOT GOING TO CHURCH. VI.

THIS man, who has been acting Referee at a Football Match, is being pelted, for the third time this season, to the Railway Station by local enthusiasts displeased at his decisions. And he says he rather enjoys it. But he won't go to Church because no one would second some proposal or other which he made at the annual business meeting of the congregation last March, and, he says, "a fellow has feelings and doesn't like to be insulted."

The Boy who always Ate his Grandfather's Crusts

Little Hughie Flemington lost his mother and father before he was three months old. He and his two brothers, one four, the other six years older, were brought up by their grandfather, the wheelwright. When Hughie was six or seven, he noticed the old man now and again putting his crusts into his tea to soften them. "I'll eat them for you," he said, "my teeth are fine and strong."

His brothers were selfish lads, and always chose the white crusts when the loaf was cut. So from one year's end to another Hughie got little but crusts, and never anything but brown crusts, to eat, and being but a boy, felt it, I must say, a little hard at times.

After a while, as the old man's health grew worse, and it was evident, after calculation, that his savings could only last another thirteen months at most, the two brothers went off to Liverpool and thought they had done an uncommonly clever thing.

There is no denying that their grandfather and Hughie were hard put to it now and then, but somehow they never missed a meal of some kind, and with every meal they sought and got a blessing. If Hughie still got all the crusts to eat, he was also sole heir to all the old man's experience. Week-day and Sabbath-day he was always

learning. A wheelwright's is a fine, all round trade, and Hughie had skill to work both in wood and iron. He picked up something, too, of forestry and mining, and at nights did calculations, and drew out plans for imaginary cottages and stables. His drawings, I tell you, were a treat to see, done to scale and as accurate and clean as if they had been going to South Kensington. "Science is measurement," the old man never ceased reminding him.

Then in one day honour came to him. By this time the old man was dead.

It wouldn't be easy to put in a few words what the law plea was about that sprang up between Lord Dudding and Sir Richard Dibdy. But it concerned the march-lines of two estates, and the right to use certain roads ; and there was a big burn, too, that had changed its bed repeatedly in the course of years, and had played havoc not only with maps but with the recollections of honest men. The case came before Lord Durie in the Court of Session, and there was, as lawyers say, "a heavy proof." At the end of seven days' hearing Lord Durie was wishing that the Lord President had not transferred that case to him but had kept it on the roll of that Judge who was known to love cases in which noblemen were involved.

It was on the afternoon of the eighth day that one of the Junior Counsel said, "Hugh Flemington is the next witness, my lord."

"I do hope," said the Judge, "that you will try to inflict as few more witnesses upon the Court as possible."

"I shall be very brief, my lord. I have only one point to examine this witness on."

So our old friend Hughie was called, and having said "Yes, sir," to three questions, and "I don't know, sir," to a fourth that was put in cross-examination, was leaving the witness-box, when the Judge, who had been puzzling himself all the week over some points on which there had been a conflict of evidence, said, not expecting enlightenment, "I don't suppose you could tell me anything about that road marked B.B on the plan 17 of process. Show witness No. 17."

Now it so happened that that was a road that Hughie and his grandfather had travelled every Sabbath day on their long six miles' road to the old Cameronian or Reformed Presbyterian Church, and Mr. Flemington at once began to talk with all the clearness and precision that come of certain knowledge. Lord Durie began to look wide awake, then interested, then charmed. Next, the agents at the table sent for their Senior Counsel to come in haste—"new developments had arisen." And still Mr. Flemington went on with his "yes," and "no," and "certainly, my lord," till he was asked what the length of B.B on 17 of process was, but when he said "1,984 yards," there was a burst of laughter, and the Judge looked grave and the Agents and the Counsel tittered. It was felt that the witness was over-doing it.

And then he explained, "You see, my lord, my grandfather and I had to go six miles to church, and he was getting frail, and for part of the way we had choice of two roads, and we wished to

know which was the shorter. So one week day I stepped them both twice over, and found the one was 1,984 yards and the other 1,770. I had practised stepping distances and knew to an inch what ground I could cover in twenty, or fifty, or five hundred steps."

"But how do you remember those distances so accurately now?"

"I put the figures down in a book I had, and I was looking at them the other day."

"Have you it with you?"

"Yes, my lord." And then he handed it to the macer, who handed it up to the Bench. It was then "put in process" and numbered 200 by the Clerk of the Court. As it was handed back it fell, and as Lord Durie picked it up he noticed a charming little drawing of a cottage.

The case was resumed next day, and when the Court adjourned for luncheon, it was agreed on all hands that no better witness had ever been in the box.

A few minutes afterwards Mr. Flemington was brought by the macer into the Judge's room.

"I would like you," said his lordship, "to show me any more drawings of cottages you have in that book. My wife and I are interested in that subject at present." So the book was sent for, and when the Index was turned up, Lord Durie smiled as he read such things in the list of contents as these: "Texts I have heard sermons on:" "Ministers I have heard preach:" "Persons who have done me a kind turn."

"I hope soon," said the Judge smiling, "to

give you a chance to put my name down in that last list."

And the chance came quickly, for within a week Lord Durie told a nobleman with whom he was dining, who was complaining of the way his woods and forests had been mismanaged, that he knew the very man for him !

And I have no doubt that when Mr. Flemington's brothers hear of his advancement, they will come and fawn on him, and remind him how, when he was a child, they were " so fond of him " and always let him have his favourite crust ! " Do you mind that, Hughie ? "

Seeing may not be believing

"The devil was a murderer from the beginning, and abode not in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaketh a lie, he speaketh of his own : for he is a liar, and the father of it."—John viii. 44.

THERE was a man some years ago in a little village who used to put a two-shilling piece in the "plate" on Sabbaths. He was not rich, yet he was richer than those who earned more and gave less. One week he felt that God had been specially good to him, and he made up his mind to add a shilling to his collection the Sabbath after. But oddly enough—how such things happen I do not know, but happen they do—the only silver change he could get on the Saturday night consisted of threepenny-bits. So next day he put eleven of them into the plate at the church door and three pennies on the top of them lest anyone should think he was pretending to put in a whole handful of silver.

When the sun shines it shines on more than one field. Temperature goes up all round, as a rule. And that Sabbath was quite a high day in that little congregation. Several families had felt their hearts warming towards God and God's cause. There was but one shilling-piece in the collection, and that was the minister's—he had only sixty pounds a year—but there were some

sixpences and more threepennies, so that the amount gathered that day was almost twice the average. There was a fine, joyous feeling in the air, too. Most people thought that somehow or other it was as happy a Sabbath as they remembered to have had.

But the elder at the plate that day was a contentious, discontented man who never did anything but find fault. On the Monday, meeting the minister, he said to him, " Yesterday was the first Sabbath in my experience, and I have been an elder for nineteen years, it will be twenty year come December since I was elected, but I never saw a Sabbath before in all that time in which there there was only one silver shilling in the plate. I doubt, I doubt the cause of religion is very low amongst us, and it didn't use to be that."

The minister was a young man and didn't know then—indeed it took him thirty years to find it out—that a grumbler should never be believed, for all grumblers are liars. On the Sabbath after he preached from the text—" The love of many shall wax cold," and was evidently so much downcast that his people went home that day, and went about their work that week, with sorrowful hearts. They felt sure he regretted coming amongst them.

On the Thursday, as the treasurer was banking the money, one of the Judges of the Court of Session—a man who was never on the side of the angels—came in to ask change for a five-pound note, and seeing so many threepennies on the counter looked inquiringly at the teller, and was told that that was a church door collection, and

that the reason why there were so many three-penny-bits was that, unfortunately for Scotch piety, there was no such coin as a two-penny-bit!

Some weeks afterwards, in the course of a debate in the Court of Session, some visitors being present, several of them Americans, a young counsel happened to remark that the difference between two offers in the case before them had only been the trifling one of twopence or threepence. "Oh! don't speak of threepence in that way, Mr. Rolfe," said our friend on the bench. "I am credibly informed that threepence is the value of a Scotsman's religion, and you know how dear that is to him. I saw a church collection recently—but don't misunderstand me! It was in a bank I saw it."

What that wise Judge said got more or less correctly into the newspapers. And then followed a series of articles on The Decline of Scotch Piety, The Reasons for the Failure of the Pulpit to reach the Educated Classes, Why Working-men won't go to Church, The Lack of Humour amongst Preachers, The Wits of the Scottish Bench and Bar, The Greed of the Clergy, and, On a Certain Obtuseness in Scotch Ministers.

The discussion reached America a month or two afterwards, and there were many touching articles in the secular and religious press with such headlines as these: The Decadence of Europe, Stands Scotland Where It Did? Presbyterianism almost Defunct, The Almighty Bawbee in the Land of the Martyrs, Astonishing Confession of a Great Scotch Judge in Open Court.

Several of these articles, which were written by young men of three-and-twenty who had had no time to see anything, or by old men who had had plenty of time, but had kept their eyes shut, began thus: "At no previous period in any country in the whole world's history," etc. etc., and one of them ended with these words: "It makes our heart bleed to have to write these words about the state of religion and morals in a land where the heather is still red with the blood of the Covenanters. But can either our facts or our inferences be disputed, when we find that only five weeks ago, in the very capital of Scotland, in the course of a great and epoch-making discussion whose far-reaching consequences we purblind mortals can but faintly discern, before an assemblage of thousands representing every class of society and every shade of opinion, a great Scotch Judge, sitting in the seat of Moncrieff, Inglis, and Jerviswoode, was not ashamed to declare that he himself had long ceased to go to Church, and only remembered his last visit by the mortification he experienced in discovering that the coin of least value either in his own pocket or his wife's purse was a three-penny piece?"

And all these falsehoods and slanders sprang out of the foolish hearts of one or two men and the solitary fact that one or two shops in a little village had run out of shillings and half-crowns on a Saturday night!

Some of you boys and girls will perhaps not understand the meaning of this that I have written, but it will save you much sorrow, and

keep you from much sin in life, if you remember these things :

1. Don't believe everything you hear.

2. Don't believe everything you read.

3. Believe nothing that a grumbler says. And

4. Don't believe everything you see. The man whom you saw putting a shilling in the plate perhaps put half-a-sovereign under it. Many a man has done that, and you may even live to do it yourselves !

Sir James Paget's Wife

When Mr. James Paget, afterwards Sir James Paget, Bart., one of the great surgeons of last century, became engaged to Miss Lydia North, daughter of the Duke of Kent's chaplain, their friends thought he had done a very foolish thing. He was then only twenty-two and fortune and fame were still to earn. But he himself said, long afterwards, "My engagement gave me for nearly eight years help and hope enough to make even the heaviest work seem light, and then it ended in a marriage blest with the constancy of perfect mutual love not once disturbed. No human wisdom could have devised a step so wise as was this rash engagement. . . . From the time of our marriage in May, 1844, 'being alone' meant being alone with one who never failed in love, in wise counsel, in prudence, and in gentle care of me. Her admirable music and her singing, with a matchless gentle voice and a pure cultivated style, were a refreshing accompaniment to my evening reading and writing; and when these were over she wrote for me, copying for the press any roughly written manuscripts, sitting with me till midnight or far into the morning, all alone, or, after a time, with the baby brought down in its cradle."

They spent the first years of their married life in St. Bartholomew's Hospital, and she remembered all her life the cries of the patients in the

operating-room a few yards off, in the years before anæsthetics. Her husband used to say she looked worse than the sufferers themselves. She always wondered that a day had not been set apart for national thanksgiving for the discovery of chloroform.

One of her sons says that "all she said and did was of a divine simplicity. It is difficult to put in words her gentle and reverent life, her faith in people, her quiet contempt for gossiping or exaggerated talk, her hero-worship, her patience, her schemes for helping people, and for providing pleasures for those to whom she could not offer charity. She did it all with her own hands. . . . She longed to write long letters to all of us that were full of ardent admiration of everybody except herself; and she kept interminable pencil lists of 'things to be done,' and was often overworked. . . . She said always that she was 'not clever,' and 'not able to talk well;' but all clever people liked talking to her. . . . She seemed to remember the romantic side of her early life, and not much of the hardship of it, beyond the misery of nursing my father through his illnesses. And in one of these her courage had been proved: for she had raised him in bed, holding his drink in one hand, and a candle in the other, and had set fire to the bed-curtain; had laid him down, and rubbed out the flames with her hands. She used to play to my father every evening, while he worked: even when she was nearly eighty, and a few weeks before her death. It was delicate, old-world home-music, of a kind not often heard now. When she had won her

first prize at the Royal Academy of Music they set her on the table that so small a student might be visible."

She died in 1895, and he in 1897. After her death he paid no marked outward reverence to days and places associated with her, saying, "What is the good of keeping anniversaries when someone is *never* out of one's mind ? "

The Khalifa's Seal

"In that day, saith the Lord of hosts, will I take thee, O Zerubbabel, My servant, the son of Shealtiel, saith the Lord, and will make thee as a signet."—Haggai ii. 23.

If God had said, "I will make thee as a ring, or as a jewel," that would have been wonderful love. For a ring is an ornament; it is very precious; it calls up happy memories; and if a man loses it he is greatly put about. But a signet is the seal with which he signs or stamps his letters, and if he loses *that*, he is as helpless as the woman who has lost the key of her house, or the merchant who has mislaid the key of his safe, or dropped on the street a bundle of signed blank cheques. A thief who finds them may ruin him in one hour's time. So valuable is a signet that we are told of one of the Lord Chancellors of England that he never allowed the Great Seal to be out of his sight, and even took it to bed with him at night. James II., you will remember, when he fled from England, threw the Great Seal into the Thames, hoping, thereby, I suppose, to paralyse for a time at least the action of the Ministers of State. When a Sovereign dies, the old Seal is solemnly broken and every fragment of it destroyed. This has to be done even when any alteration, however slight, is made in the Sovereign's arms or titles, as, for example, when Queen Victoria became Empress of India. The

Seal represents all that the Sovereign for the time being is; it represents him in his fullest and his latest glory. And that is the honour that God puts upon His saints. It is as if He said, "Ye are My representatives, My witnesses, My credentials, My signature, My handwriting, the proof to men that I am God, the symbol of My authority, an essential part of everything I do; without you I am nothing; he that touches you touches the apple of Mine eye, touches even more than that—touches My very being. I will write upon you My new Name."

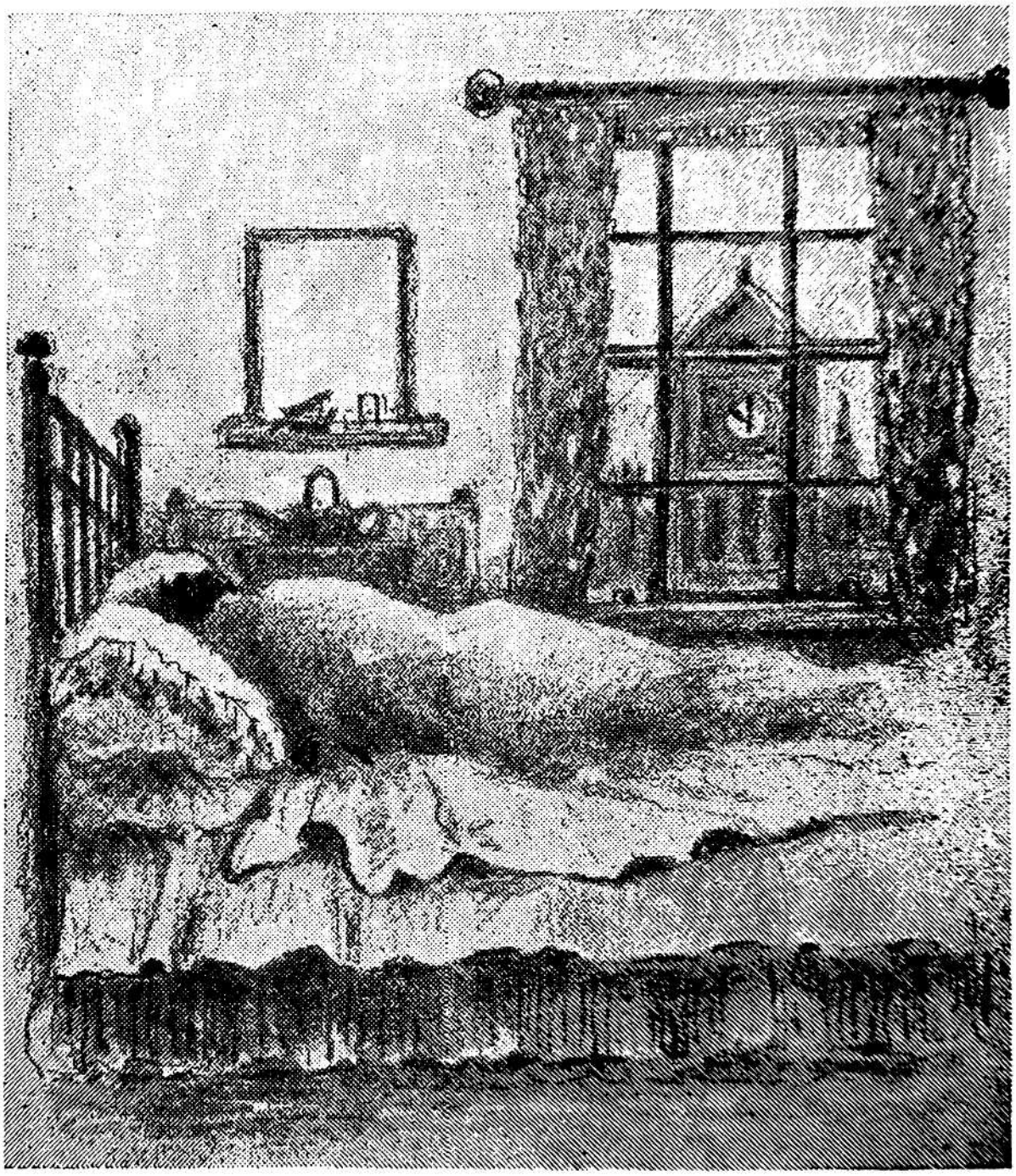
I have an exact copy of the seal of the Khalifa, who was defeated at Omdurman by Lord Kitchener. It fell, along with a mass of correspondence and other documents, into the hands of Col. Sir F. R. Wingate, K.C.B., D.S.O., the Head of the Intelligence Department of the army in Egypt, and it is to the kindness of a relative of his that I owe this facsimile. The inked sponge with which the seal was moistened was the one used by the Khalifa himself, who carried it in the case of an old silver watch, out of which he had taken the works, that belonged to Hicks Pasha, the unfortunate officer who commanded the Egyptian army that was annihilated by the Mahdi in 1883.

The words, which are Arabic, mean this—"The representative of him who stands at the door waiting." The words are interesting, first as a specimen of the mock humility—the only kind of humility they have—so characteristic of Eastern potentates; and secondly as a curious description of a man who bolted in the

hour of battle, and has been, like Cain, a fugitive ever since.

And yet, as we look at the words again, can we imagine a truer description of the King of kings, our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ? "Behold, I stand at the door and knock." "It is the voice of my Beloved that knocketh, saying, Open to Me, My sister, My love, My dove, My undefiled: for My head is filled with dew, and My locks with the drops of the night." And every child of God should be His representative, telling the world by every word and deed, every look and gesture, that God is waiting to be gracious, stretching forth His hands all day long unto a disobedient and gainsaying people.

REASONS FOR NOT GOING TO CHURCH. VII.



This young man was not at Church last Sabbath, because, he says, "his watch stopped during the night and he did not know what time it was."

A Lesson from the Trees

"When the Lord shall have brought thee into the land, to give thee great and goodly cities, which thou buildedst not, and houses full of all good things, which thou filledst not, and wells digged, which thou diggedst not, vineyards and olive trees, which thou plantedst not; then beware lest thou forget the Lord."—Deut. vi. 10.

SOME years ago a sweet looking old woman, with roses in her cheeks and a young fruit tree in her hand—I forget what kind of tree it was—came into a railway carriage in which I happened to be travelling, at an Ayrshire roadside station. She was very free and hearty in her way, and chatted very pleasantly about her little house and garden. She told us where she meant to put the tree, adding, in answer to a question, that she didn't expect to get any fruit off it for at least five years. When she said that—for she looked well over seventy—some young people in the carriage were so taken aback that they laughed outright. The older ones amongst us wondered at her courage, but said nothing. Moltke, the great German warrior, once remarked to a friend as they came near a clump of fine trees, "It is never too late to begin a good work. I began to plant these trees shortly before my seventieth year, and now I am reaping the benefit of them." He was eighty-three when he said that, and so I hope, and should not be a bit surprised to find, that that old woman is living yet, and that she has had many

years' reward for her courage and patience and faith. For it needs courage and faith and hope, and something greater still, and that is love, to do a thing like that. No wonder Elspeth Lunny, in Mr. Barrie's *Little Minister*, always got angry when she heard her husband speak of planting trees for the benefit of the men that were to occupy his farm after him. It was a very natural thing for her to do, but it was very wrong. Other men before us have laboured and we have entered into their labours. We best pay our debt to those who went before us by leaving a similar debt to those who shall come after us.

How the planting and rearing of trees may help to educate both individuals and nations is finely shown by Prof. George Adam Smith in speaking of the olive tree in his great book on " Jerusalem."

The olive, he tells us, is much less fertile in the fat plains than where it grows upon high rocky slopes or terraces, in a wash of wind and sunshine. The most favourable conditions for its culture are a warm, porous limestone soil, where the winter frosts are moderate or transitory, and where the summers, when the berries ripen, have either little or no rainfall. The tree flourishes on stony declivities that will produce no other fruit, and is also at home on marly soil, and among the shot *debris* of hills and even of ruined towns. Round Jerusalem these conditions are all present, and the Palestine olive reaches its best. To *the labour of the olive*, then, we may believe that the earlier like the later inhabitants of Jerusalem mainly applied themselves, and reaped not only the wealth which the

tree ultimately yields to its possessor, but those moral endowments which observers, ancient and modern, have justly attributed to the discipline of its slow and skilful cultivation. The berries yield their farmer food and light, ointment for cleansing, healing, and festival; the timber provides his furniture and fuel. But if his farm be a highland one, the olive, besides thus fulfilling so many domestic uses, is practically the only one of his crops which yields a surplus over his yearly wants, and is therefore ready for export or exchange.

The harvest of the olive, however, comes only to a long patience. The young plant is carefully cultivated for seven or eight years before engrafting, and even then for three years more before it bears fruit, but it is only after fifteen to twenty years that it reaches its full value. Watering is necessary in the earlier stages, and frequent digging, as much as three and five times a year. After this the tree may endure for centuries, for it possesses with its very slow growth so enormous a vitality that we may call it imperishable. How all this makes for the increase of caution and foresight in a community, for habits of industry and love, may be easily realised.

Dr. Ussher, of Armagh, the friend of Samuel Rutherford, once said after a long conference with a friend, "Come, doctor, let us say something about Christ before we part." So, to follow that example, let me quote one more paragraph from Professor Smith. "The olive does not appear in the Parables of our Lord, nor its oil in the Sacraments He instituted. But it is enshrined in His

name, the Christ, that is, the Anointed ; and it is the symbol of the consecration and endowment of His Church by His Spirit. Nor can the Christian heart forget that it was beneath olive trees and hard by an olive press that the Divine Passion was accomplished, and the Saviour bowed Himself to His sacrifice for the life of men."

Miss Thursby's Rockery

"Behold, this stone shall be a witness against us."—Joshua xxiv. 27 (R.V.)

Miss Eglantine Thursby was an elderly, unmarried lady; one could almost have foreseen from her name that that was to be her destiny. She was very tall and very handsome, and but for a certain sourness in her look at times would have been a beautiful woman. Sourness, ay, bitterness, and no wonder, for she had been sorely tried and wronged. In her childhood she had heard much about the virtues of Scotch people, their honesty, their thrift, and their religiousness. It was her lot, however, to fall more than once into the hands of thieves, and unfortunately all the thieves were Scotch. That which a firm of Scottish stock-brokers left, a firm of Scotch builders ate, and what the builders left, a firm of Scotch lawyers ate. When she was past middle age circumstances brought her to Scotland, and once more she fell in with people who were anything but kind. Wherever she went each neighbour proved more disobliging and more quarrelsome than the last, while as for their children, not one of them would run an errand for her unless he were paid for it, and even then he seemed to think his going was a favour. On his return home the first salutation his mother and the neighbours gave him would be like

this : " And what did the old wretch give you ? " and the answer would be, " She only gave me 2d."

Her name was a perennial fount of amusement. They affected never to be able to remember it. When the postman told them her first name was Eglantine, they changed it first to Jessamine, and then to Columbine. " What's come over the Columbine ? " one would say to another, " for I haven't seen her these two days." A young nephew came to visit her, and when in answer to the question, " Who can that be that's staying with Miss Thursday ? " one of the neighbours suggested that it would be her " man Friday," it was thought that the power of human wit could no further go.

Chance, which is one of the names men give to God, brought her in process of time to a little lonely cottage about a mile from our village. Her only neighbours were the Templetons, a family that lived in another cottage about one hundred yards away, and if all Miss Thursby's previous Scotch acquaintances, like the figs in one of Jeremiah's baskets, were very naughty—" which could not be eaten they were so bad "—her new friends, like the figs in the other basket, were not only good, but very good, " even like the figs that are first ripe." There are few such households anywhere, and anyone whose lot it was to live near them might well have said, "The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places."

Mrs. Templeton, as is every woman's duty, did her best to show she made her neighbour welcome. But Miss Thursby was in her most acid mood and

manner, and I fear hardly acted like a lady. Mrs. Templeton said nothing, but listened quietly, remembering that the heart knoweth its own bitterness, and resolved to wait patiently and bide her time. But all in vain; there was no advance, however kindly meant, that was not instantly repelled.

The Templetons had a lovely rockery in their garden. Its first beginning was a few white pebbles gathered by her children on the shore. But one day the elder boys and girls—there were seven of them in all—saw their mother's mouth water as she gazed at a specimen of gardener's art at one of our Scottish Exhibitions, and they formed a great resolve.

Fully half-a-mile past their cottage there was a rocky promontory, and on the beach most lovely bits of quartz, some white as snow, some richly veined with red and green. It was the eldest boy's proposal, and this is what he said. "Suppose we were each to fetch the largest and prettiest stones we can find, one for every year of our life, that would make a splendid rockery. Suppose we try to have it ready for Mother's birthday! That would make a fine present for her, for every stone would stand for a year in the life of one of us!"

The proposal was adopted, and in due time carried out. How much work that meant, how many weary backs and weary legs and cut fingers, only those who have built a rockery can know; and how much joy it brought only a mother can know; but how much love it was the sign of I hope you all know. The eldest sister did the

designing, for she had taste and a strong will. Then, when her birthday came, they led their mother out and showed her, what she had never noticed, that every stone had a letter scratched on it, and a number, and the letter stood for the initial of the one who had gathered it, and the number stood for a year in that one's life, and the rockery was to be a family monument, a memorial of love. Their mother said nothing, only she cried ; but next morning, before one of them was up, she went out, and every stone—and there were seventy-six she kissed in turn. But she told nobody that except the minister. He had noticed some of the scratchings, and he was so inquisitive !

God sets the solitary in families, for it was not good for any one to be alone, and so it came about one day that Miss Thursby *had* to call on Mrs. Templeton about a letter left at her house by mistake. As she was going away the rockery caught her eye. It was looking very beautiful. The children had made their mother put the first plant in, and she had chosen a forget-me-not. Each week, almost each day, saw some addition, fern, stone-crop, toad-flax, periwinkle, or campanula. Miss Thursby was delighted, and in a moment of forgetfulness exclaimed : " What I would give to have something like that ! My father had one when I was little and we lived in Devonshire." " My boys will be very pleased and proud to gather the stones for you if you will let them," was the answer. But then her pride asserted itself once more, and Miss Thursby, thinking this was another illustration of Scotch

thrift, said, in her iciest tone, "No, thank you. I will gather them myself if I wish them."

The very next morning they saw her gathering, like Sir Isaac Newton, a few pebbles on the shore, and then a great thought entered into the mind of Mrs. Templeton. "I'm sorry for Miss Thursby," she said. "I'm sure she has had great trials in her life and, poor body, it has made her bitter and suspicious. Now she has set her heart on a rockery, but she'll get no rockery there, unless we help her somehow. And I want you to gather stones just as you did for me, as many and as bonnie, and put your names on them, only very small. And you are to bury the stones, one or two each day, as the tide suits, in the sand, and in the shingle, leaving a little bit sticking up, so that she may find them for herself, but we'll not tell her till God Himself opens up the way, and maybe she'll see then that there is such a thing in the world as kindliness and good feeling."

And that is what the children did, only, for practice makes perfect, they gathered better ones and bigger ones, and these were all duly buried and duly dug up, and carried home in triumph! And wasn't it a treat to see the old lady's face beaming as she struggled home with some bit of treasure trove every day in the week! And, good as Nancy Templeton was at arranging them, Miss Thursby was far better.

I have forgotten to tell you about one stone that she was specially proud of. The boys had left it lying when they were gathering for themselves, it was too big to carry all that way. But it was a beauty, like a bit of snow-white marble

pink with the setting sun. Now they thought they would bring it as their mother's contribution, and so they did, burying it judiciously as they had done the others. Knowing that Miss Thursby could not carry it, were it to save her life, they passed along the road, as if by accident, the very moment after she had unearthed it and was standing gazing at it as though it were Cleopatra's needle.

"May we help you to carry it, Miss Thursby?" said the eldest boy.

"No, thank you," was her answer, and she turned her back on them

And then what did the boy do but hurry home, put on an old coat, and a huge cravat round his neck, and an old straw hat, come back, and pretending to be a tramp walking from Lancashire to Fifeshire where he was told he was sure of work, offer to carry the boulder for her for a shilling and a pair of boots or old trousers!

"If you care to do it for threepence you may," she said, "but I'll give you no more."

"All right, ma'am," he said, "but you Scotch people are hard at driving a bargain."

It was a big lift, and he was glad enough when he had set it down.

"Are you quite sure, ma'am," he said, "you haven't an old pair of boots that would fit me?" That of course was just his fun, said chiefly to keep up his character of tramp.

"Put the stone there," she said, pointing out the place, "and there's a sixpence for you."

"It's an uncommonly pretty stone," he said,

slipping the sixpence underneath as though giving his job a finishing touch.

A year afterwards, at the urgent bidding of her brother, a prosperous man in Canada, Mrs. Templeton and all her children said farewell to Scotland. She was sorry to leave the stones behind her—"but we'll get far grander ones over there," her children said—but she was sorrier still, I think, to go away before she had overcome her unhappy neighbour's prejudice. The morning they left home, after worship and a prayer in each room, and a glance at all the grates to make sure they had left a day's firing for the new tenant, and a last look at the rockery, Mrs. Templeton went to bid Miss Thursby good-bye. The boys and girls stood crying on the road. The lady hesitated, then shook hands, and said "Good-bye," and closed the door before her visitor was half-way down the garden walk.

"I suppose," she said to herself, "she would be expecting me to give her children something."

A month or two afterwards, our minister, waxing courageous, ventured to call on our haughty dame. She began once more her usual tirade about Scotch dishonesty and greed. "They are all alike," she said.

"I'm sure," he said, "you did not find the Templetons dishonest?"

"No, they didn't get the chance. But I saw they could be greedy from the first day I came."

And then the minister opened her eyes, telling her the story of the stones as he himself had got it, and then about the last big stone. "It's too dark to see it to-night," he said, "but if it

were daylight you would find a T scratched on it somewhere, and the words ' with great goodwill,' but it's not too late to turn the stone over on its side, and find the sixpence that you gave her boy."

When the minister left, Miss Thursby was crying, and she continued crying all that night. Next day she wrote two letters, a short one to the minister and a long one to Canada, both delightful, but the second one was the more delightful of the two.

The Harvest Mice

Once upon a time, long, long ago, there was a gathering of all the quadrupeds or four-footed animals. Big and little, wild and tame, all had been summoned. A fifty days' peace had been proclaimed and biting and devouring forbidden under pain of death.

As the day of meeting drew near there was many a strange sight to be seen. Beasts were coming from every direction—for there were no roads then—and in any order; rats and polar bears, rabbits and rhinoceroses, buffaloes and tigers, elephants and weasels. It was better than any wild beast show that ever was.

Now there lived in those days a harvest mouse and his wife, who were much puzzled what to do: The place of meeting was a long way off; they knew no one who was going; they were so small that they felt their presence could do no good and their absence would never be noticed; and above all, they had a nest and nine little ones.

"I think you ought to go," his wife said; "you have been summoned."

"The little shrews are not going," he replied, "because they are the smallest quadrupeds in Europe, and you know, my dear, that we are the next smallest."

"I know that," she said, "but you must not mind what others do; you must do your duty."

"And leave you and the children all alone? I can't do that."

"Then I'll go with you, and we'll take the children with us,"

Now this, I do believe, was what he wanted all along, only he did not like to be the first to propose it. For she was not strong, and yet he thought the trip would do her good; and besides, what pleasure can a husband have anywhere if his wife is not with him?

"You are a brave wee lass," he said; "you should have been a lioness. We shall all go together—"

So they set off, and took their nest with them, sometimes pulling it, sometimes rolling it. For it was as large and as round as a cricket ball. It was made of blades of grass and wheat, which they had cut into shreds with their teeth, and woven and twined together. It had been suspended among the stalks of wheat about five inches from the ground. It rolled quite easily and smoothly. The little ones, who were packed as tight as they could be, had never had such fun; and then their mother now and again opened the nest a little bit to feed them and see how they were getting on.

But they got one fright on the way, and that was when a big cat made upon them. He made ready for a spring, but at that very moment he caught sight of a huge mastiff bounding towards him. So he drew back and went his way, saying to the poor, trembling mice, "It's well for you, I can tell you, that there is a fifty days' peace just now." But you should have seen how his

teeth chattered and how he beat the ground with his tail.

On the day of the meeting, and exactly at the appointed hour, the lion came. With one consent the other beasts made way for him, and so, without his asking, and even against his will, he found himself sitting alone, in the midst of a huge circle, the acknowledged King of Beasts.

At the sight of the great assembly the courage of the little harvest-mice failed them, and they were for drawing back. The largest and noblest beasts encouraged them, an elephant from Asia even saying, "If you go away, I go too." But there were other beasts, led on by the disappointed cat, who frowned on them, and taunted them. "You dare to call yourselves quadrupeds, you little vermin!" they said.

Now all this made some uproar and confusion on the outskirts of the concourse, and the lion demanded to know the reason.

"It is two miserable little creatures, please your majesty," said the cat, "who are insisting on getting in amongst us."

"Bring them to me," said the lion.

O what joy filled the cat's breast. He was the first to whom the king of beasts had spoken, and, as he passed through the assembly's ranks, he could hear murmurs of jealousy and admiration. Visions of greatness filled his mind. He tried to look as like a tiger as he could, held his head high, and made his tail assume the most imposing curves he could command.

He returned presently, driving the two terrified mice with their nestful of babes before him.

The whole assembly was hushed in silence. The cat looked prouder and fiercer than ever.

The lion rose. Then, as he gazed at the little group before him, a strange sweet look passed over his kingly face, and to the amazement of all, he advanced and three times did obeisance to the little harvest-mice.

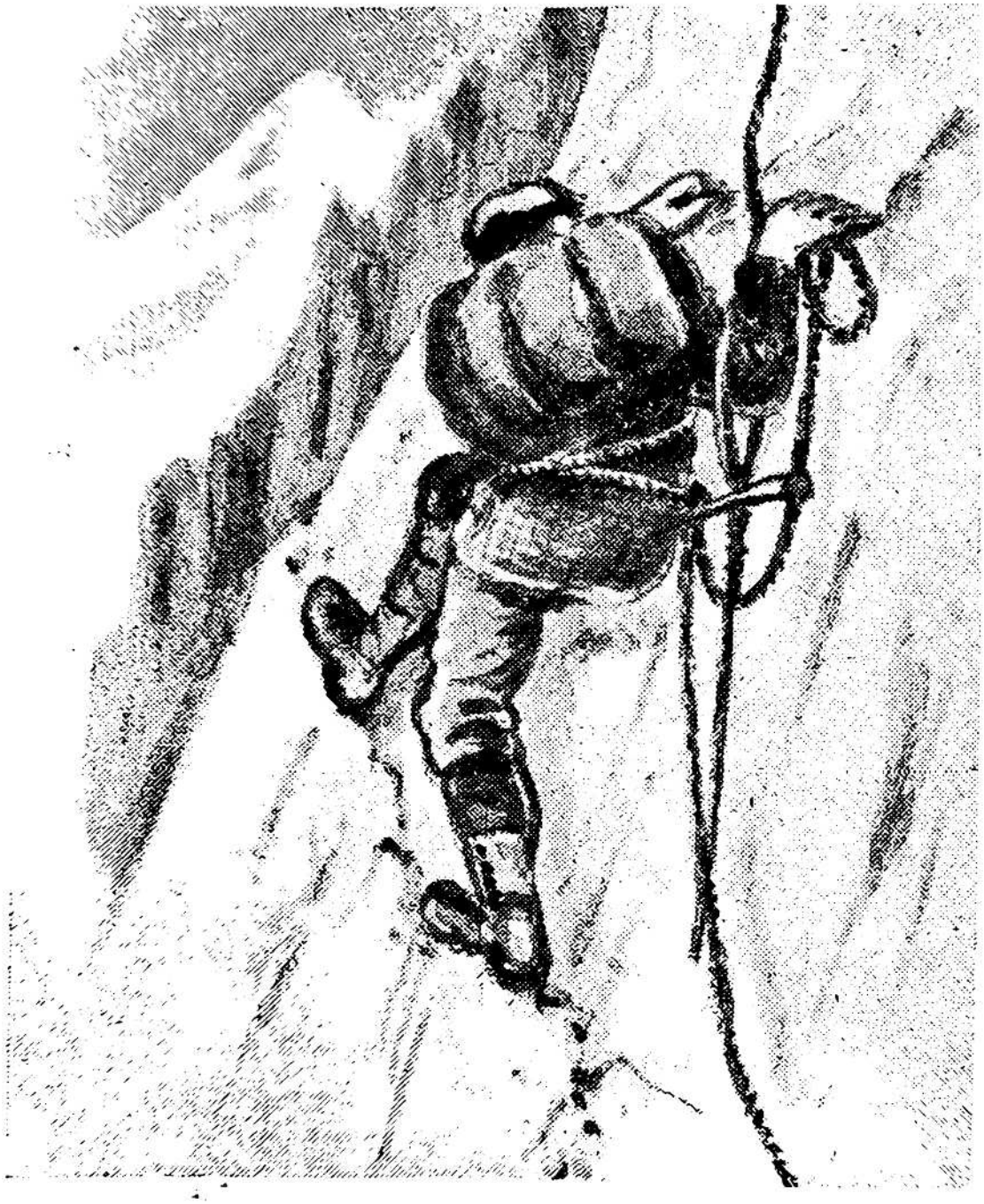
Then, standing erect, he shook his mane as if to show his glory, and looking round on all the host about him, said, "Subjects and friends, I was once caught in a hunter's net. This mouse gnawed through the strands and rescued me. Is it your pleasure that he and his wife and their little ones do sit beside me in the place of honour?"

There was a mighty roar of approbation. Then he lay down, and the mice at his right side.

The cat, meantime, stood paralysed with terror. The lion rose again, and once more there was an awful silence. Then in a voice that shook the earth he cried, "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted, and he that exalteth himself shall be abased." And then he added, "The cat will now please return to his place, on the outside row."

For a few moments the cat seemed hardly able to move, and then, how it slunk away, looking not half the size it had been. How it passed through the throng it never afterwards could recollect. It only knew that no one spoke to it but the mastiff, and what he said was this: "It's well for you, I can tell you, that there is a fifty days' peace just now."

REASONS FOR NOT GOING TO CHURCH. VIII.



THIS young man spends a month in Switzerland every year mountaineering. He has climbed the Matterhorn twice, but he did not go to Church last Sabbath "because the roads were too slippery for anything." Yet his old nurse went, and she was seventy-seven—or was it seventy-eight?—last October.

"For Turnips I Once Stole"

"When thou comest into thy neighbour's vineyard, then thou mayest eat grapes thy fill at thy pleasure; but thou shalt not put any in thy vessel."—Deut. xxiii. 24.

A LADY kindly sent me the other day a letter which a friend of hers, a farmer, received nearly two years ago, with one shilling enclosed and a little scrap of paper with but five words in pencil on it—"For turnips I once stole."

Whoever wrote it added no more. It has neither date nor place, nor name. But the letter, like the book that the old Wizard Merlin had—you may read of it in Tennyson's *Vivien*—has literally, and still more so spiritually, "an ample marge."

> "And every margin scribbled, crost, and cramm'd,
> With comment, densest condensation, hard
> To mind and eye . . .
> And none can read the text . . .
> And none can read the comment . . . "

neither you nor I, nor the farmer who got the letter, nor the man who wrote it (I presume it was a man, but I may be wrong). For the letter, like the tables Moses got, is the work of God, and the writing is the writing of God, written with the finger of God, and it is written on both sides, written on the one side and on the other. And it is sealed with many seals, and only Christ is able and worthy to read it all. But we can read some of it and imagine more.

"For Turnips I Once Stole"

To begin with, it is a perfect specimen of English prose. "How would you describe the style of Addison?" the late Prof. Veitch, of Glasgow University once asked his Logic and Rhetoric class, and I remember how a student, eager to strip his rivals in answering, roared out in his excitement and all in one breath: "DIGNITY WITHOUT OSTENTATION: SIMPLICITY WITHOUT VULGARITY." O, how we did laugh, both then and often since! The student, I imagine, had read that in some manual of English literature. Whether it describes the style of Addison or not, I do not know, but this I do know, that to judge by what one has read of Addison and of the pains he took in writing—is it not told in history how he kept the Privy Council waiting till they could wait no longer, because he could not put in fitting words that would please himself, the fact that "the king was dead"? Addison, at his best, I say, could not have written a better or more impressive line than that: "For turnips I once stole"—not a word too many, or too few, all Saxon, and eighty per cent of the words of only one syllable.

But how much writing came before that? The writing upon his mind of the Ten Commandments by the person's mother, or grandmother, or teacher, the re-writing of them in so many ways we do not know of upon the memory that came to the conscience and the heart and will straight from the Holy Spirit? Then think of the long conflict with God and with himself, the pleas and counter-pleas, the extenuation of his fault, the self-justification, the surrender, the

self-condemnation. Not—"two or three turnips." Not—"some turnips thoughtlessly taken away without meaning any harm," or "taken away when I felt a grudge against you." Not even—"taken," or "stolen," but "I stole."

But there's a writing that follows, as well as a writing that precedes, and a writing that underlies these words. For the farmer's daughter, when she saw the letter, felt like David when the three mighty men brake through the hosts of the Philistines and drew water out of the well of Bethlehem that is by the gate, and took it and brought it to him—"nevertheless he would not drink thereof, but poured it out unto the Lord;" so she, feeling that this was holy money, a "shekel of the sanctuary," bought not with man's blood only but with the blood of Christ, laid it aside for God, and gave it to a collector for the National Bible Society of Scotland, the lady who sent the letter to me.

And that shilling, we may be sure, was earmarked, like all other money that is lovingly given to Him, by God Himself, marked with Christ's Image and Superscription, and its history and adventures and the interest it has already won and is to win will all be told and accounted for by God at that last day.

"I, even I, am He That blotteth out thy transgressions for Mine Own sake, and will not remember thy sins." If you and I were to blot out a debt of a shilling in a book we would do it by putting a stroke through it—and still people could read it. But when God blots out a debt He does it perfectly, handsomely, He turns the

minus into a plus, and the one shilling into one hundred, so that "— one shilling" becomes "+ one hundred shillings"! He not only no more imputes our sins to us, no more puts them to our account, but imputes to us the very righteousness of His Own dear Son. The handwriting that was against us He blots out by nailing it, in the sight of all men, to His Cross. Our sins He remembers no more by making an everlasting memorial of them to the glory and joy of His Good Spirit.

How far that shilling has yet to go no one can tell, no one can imagine. I hope the telling of its story by the farmer's daughter and by her friend may by God's grace gain more and more, more than money, thirty-fold, sixty-fold, an hundred-fold in years to come. Perhaps long after *The Morning Watch* has ceased to be, when its name has long passed into oblivion, some one may tell this story not in the least remembering where he read or heard it, and to some poor Achan who has stolen a wedge of gold, the valley of Achor may be the door of hope, and some sinner, even one repenting only after he has been found out and suffering the due reward of his deeds, may see to his joy that it is possible even for him—to use the wonderful words of Joshua to the malefactor after he was condemned—"to glorify God."

The verses from Deuteronomy at the head of this story seem to press a little hard on the farmer. No other man is treated that way. We are not allowed to go into a grocer's, or an ironmonger's, or a banker's and lift what we are

needing. Why then should a farmer have the burden laid on him ?

The answer to that is this. The farmer or husbandman, to give him his Bible name, stands in a peculiar relationship to God and to his fellow-men. In many ways he depends more on God than they do. One night's frost, one hour of fiery heat, one storm of wind or rain or hail, might undo the labour of a year. But sun, moon and stars all fight for him. Most men's work stands still when they leave it, but God works both with and for the farmer. He lies down and sleeps, but his crops are growing all the time. As he is therefore the special receiver, so he must also be the special dispenser of God's bounty. He is God's trustee for the world's behoof.

But he is also specially indebted to his fellow men. Our journeys are lengthened because we dare not walk over his grain. If one of his gates be left open by mischance, the passer by must close it. If cattle break through into his field, we must not hide ourselves or pretend we do not see them. We must go and tell him : if need be, help to drive them out. A hungry man had therefore, by the law of Moses, the right to take and eat a little, and God made allowance for that in blessing the fruits of the field. But people hadn't the right to go and eat turnips regularly, or carry off a basketful.

There was a farmer in Wigtownshire, some years ago, who was greatly respected, though he had some odd ways. They say that once, going his rounds at night, he saw in the moonlight a woman filling her sack from one of his potato

pits. He stood and waited till she had lifted it on to her back, and then, just as she was setting out homewards, perhaps rejoicing that she had got on so well without being seen, he cried out to her, "My good woman, why did you go to that pit? There are far better potatoes in the pit in the next field!" And she dropped her load and ran, and the farmer got the sack, and many a body since then, and I have no doubt the woman herself too, had a good laugh over her adventure.

A man told me once that when he was a boy he got great credit for walking ten miles several times a week to go and see an old aunt who was lying ill. Five miles out and five miles back was a long road for a boy, and he told me he often thought with himself that it wasn't so much his auntie that he went to see, as a fine beanfield halfway on the road. He had one feast going, and another returning. I rather think that that boy, like the woman at the potato pit, would have come under Moses' condemnation. You may eat, if you are passing by, for refreshment, or if, like our Lord's disciples, you are very hungry, but you must not take a sickle with you and make a trade of it. And when you go into the field, don't pull up more than you can eat, and don't trample either on the blades or on the bulbs, especially if you have tackets in your boots; then shut the gate behind you, and if you chance to meet the farmer on the road, especially if you are eating the turnip at the time, you must thank him and tell him you are debtor to him, and unless he be a churl like Nabal or there be twelve or fifteen of you, he won't be very angry!

There was a woman I knew, who had a few gooseberry bushes, and when the time for fruit was come, she resolved to ask all the message boys who came to her door to go into her garden and pull fifty berries each, that is about sixty with good measure. But the first two that came stayed so long that she went out to see them, and they had not only been eating as hard as they could all the time, but they had filled all their pockets, and were now busy filling their caps.

They were never asked in again, and what was worse, they had eaten the share of the boys that were to come after them.

The Rev. John Smith, M.A.

Mr. Smith was one of the Assistant Masters at Harrow, one of the great public schools of England, from 1854 to 1880. He died in 1893 at the age of seventy, and many years after some of his pupils wrote a little book about him to let the world know what kind of man he was. He seems to have been one to whom Christ and Heaven were very real and very near.

Here are some of what he called his "Watch-words," which he taught the boys under him in season and out of season.

1. "It is as easy to be a minute too soon as a minute too late."

The first time a boy was late he had to repeat that sentence fifty times. And Mr. Smith took care, of course, never to be late himself.

2. "Cleanliness is next to Godliness."

All the boys had to show their hands every day before lessons began, and if anyone had dirty nails he was sent out to clean them, and when he came back he had to say that sentence fifty times, and then go to the bottom of the class. And if a boy spilt ink on the "sacred floor" of the class-room, though he were a nobleman of high degree, he had to go, after school, get a pail of water and soap, and clear it up; then when every trace of the offence had disappeared, he had to stand up

and say "Cleanliness is next to Godliness" one hundred times.

3. "A difficulty is a thing to be overcome."

No boy was allowed to say "I can't," which reminds one of what our neighbours across the Channel say: "The impossible is that which Frenchmen are born to do."

4. "Duty before pleasure any day."

5. "The richest man is he who has the fewest wants."

6. "He who returns the blow is really he who begins the quarrel."

7. "Never put off till to-morrow what ought to be done to-day."

When a careless exercise was shown him, he would say, "Now, would you like our Saviour to look through this?" The answer was always prompt, "No, indeed, Sir." Then he would say, "I'm nobody; it is the Saviour you must think of, not me."

Nor would he allow a boy to have any blots or erasures in what he wrote. If a correction was necessary, it had to be written neatly in the margin. Mistakes were excusable, but slovenliness was a thing not to be endured. His own letters were models of neatness and accuracy. One who has read a great number of them, written, many of them, in his old age and when he was in great pain, says he found only one mistake. He had spelt the word Calceolarias *Calceoarlies*, but he had corrected it characteristically; he put

* after the words, and at the foot of the page he had written : * Please forgive misspelling—it is a very hard word."

In China the highest posts in the Empire used to be gained by written examinations, and beautiful writing was as necessary as high thinking. Once, they say, the essays written by the two best candidates were so equal in merit that the examiners could not say which was the better, and the papers were brought to the late Empress, and she, holding them up against the light, found out that one of the writers had made a little mistake in one word and had then scratched it out ! and that lost him the first place.

In the High School in Glasgow they used to give a medal every year to the best reader. But if one of the competitors made the slightest mistake, missing out a word or mis-pronouncing it, he was instantly put out of the running, and to that rule—and it sometimes seemed a very hard one—the English master, Mr. James Bell, would make no exception. Just as in Highland games, when men are doing the Sword Dance, the moment one of the swords is touched, however lightly, the piper who accompanies him brings the music to a close and the unhappy competitor makes his bow and leaves the ring.

Take one other lesson from Mr. Smith. One Sabbath evening after worship he said to the boys, "As I pass along these wind-swept passages to-night, and, going into your rooms, see there your sleeping forms, and beside your bed your clothes unfolded or strewn upon the floor, I think to myself, 'Would the dear Lord be

pleased if He came to fetch a boy in his sleep to-night, and found that he had left his clothes in such disorder ?' Would you do me the favour in future to fold up your clothes, and leave them ready on your chairs ? "

On Monday, says the man who tells the story, came the sequel, overheard in words here written.

" I say, what do you think ? "—it was a little Lower school-boy speaking—" Last night, of course, I left my clothes about as usual. In came Old John. He called my name, but I didn't let on I was awake. So he took up my things and folded them and put them on the chair himself. Of course he thought I was asleep, but I think it was rather a chouse, so I suppose I shall have to fold up my own clothes after this."

What passage towards the end of John's Gospel does this incident remind you of ?

The Boy who Took the Currants

"The wicked flee when no man pursueth."—Prov. xxviii. 1.

THERE was a boy who climbed a wall and took some red currants—only they weren't red but green—out of an old gentleman's garden.

This is a short chapter in print but it was a big chapter in that boy's history.

Now the old gentleman, or rather, as he would have liked to be called, the elderly gentleman, was in the habit of taking a run of two or three hundred yards every day along the road, like the late Mr. Sidgwick of Cambridge, and even, when no one was looking, of walking on his hands and turning a somersault like the famous admiral Farragut, just to keep his joints from rusting. The boy, after running a dozen yards or so, finding no one after him, was beginning to examine and taste his booty, when suddenly he heard the click of a gate and saw an old bare-headed man come flying out.

A boy may run because he is playing a game, or out of mere exuberance of spirits, or because he has nothing else to do, but curiously, one always thinks there is something wrong when a man runs. There has been an accident and he is going for the doctor, or there is a fire, or either he is a thief, or after one, and so that boy felt, and not without reason.

He took to his heels again, and could easily have

got away, I imagine, but fear unmans a man and still more unboys a boy. He had run only twenty yards, when hearing his pursuer's steps seemingly making up on him, his knees were loosened, as Homer says, and he lay down, and flinging away the currants, as a boy will, to prove that he hadn't taken any, screamed like a stricken hare.

The old gentleman, of course, saw at once what had happened but, partly because he had some letters to put into the pillar-box that stood at the corner of the country lane a little way ahead, and partly from his love of fun, first slowed down a bit when the boy began to crouch, and then suddenly quickening his pace, ran straight on ahead, as fast as he could go, without saying one word! The boy, amazed, stopped crying, thinking perhaps the bitterness of death was past, and gazed after the old man as though he were seeing some strange portent. He saw him post the letters, and then, "oh, dear! oh, dear!" the old man turned and came running back harder than before! Then the boy turned too, and ran once more, but an evil conscience is a sore clog to one's heels, and when, after the gate was passed, he heard his enemy come rushing on, the boy screamed once more, "It wasn't me! It was another boy that gave them to me. I'll never do it again!" But the old gentleman said never a word. He just ran round him the way torpedo destroyers sometimes circle round our Clyde steamers to show their paces off, and then made for the gate once more and turned in.

Then the boy got up on his feet again and set off for home, but very wearily, for, like the

Knights of the Round Table, he had had an adventure, and had seen a marvel and was ill at ease. Two or three times that afternoon, when he was playing at rounders, his companions asked him what was wrong with him, he had such a scared and hunted look, with his eyes ever turned on the sky-line, like those of British soldiers when they came home from the War.

Two weeks after, the little fellow—I may as well tell you his first name was Duncan, a good, honest, sturdy name, if not a poetical one—two weeks afterwards, I say, he was whistling as he walked along the street of the little town on whose outskirts he had got his grievous fright, and it was the first time he had had the heart to whistle since, when suddenly, but very quietly, a hand touched his shoulder. Before he had time to look up or even think, he heard some one say kindly, "Now, don't be afraid. I'm not a bit angry with you. I never took any currants when I was a boy, for there were none to take, but I took stalks of rhubarb; I wouldn't do that now; and many a time I knocked pears down off an old ill-natured man's tree, and many a chase I got. If he had had the sense to know it, the best way he could have punished us would have been to let us eat as many of those pears as we could. So I know what it is to be a boy. But I wish to tell you why people are angry with boys for taking—I don't like the word stealing—flowers or fruit. A boy thinks that the tree just grew there, and that the fruit just grew too, naturally, and that the owner of the garden has no more to do with it than any other body. A boy

doesn't know that a man has as a rule to buy the tree, or the berry bush, that he has to dig about it, and prune it, and keep insects off it, wait sometimes for years before fruit comes; and then, some day, before the fruit is ripe, a lad comes and not only pulls it off but breaks some of the branches, perhaps even destroys the tree. He does it without thinking, it is true, but all the same he does it, and then people wonder why the owner or the gardener is so angry that he tells the police."

Then the old man shook hands with the boy, only before they parted he made him promise to come next day and bring two companions with him, "and you'll get some gooseberries; the *sulphurs*, if you know what that means, are quite ripe."

Next day the boy and his companions went, and I tell you they had a feast.

After a little while, Duncan disappeared, but presently the old man found him looking with a very woe-begone face at a broken currant bush on the wall.

"Please, sir," he said, "I'm very sorry, I didn't know I had done so much mischief that day."

Ay, and he had done more mischief than he knew, for the bush had sprung from a slip the old man had taken from a garden far, far away in England, where his wife had been brought up. He did not tell the boy that, of course, for what does a boy know of love? And he had not suspected at the time that that was the bush the boy had stripped that morning, otherwise he

would not have capered, I daresay, exactly as he did.

The boys were sent off with their pockets full, and with an armful of rhubarb each for their mothers. And you should hear the grand things the boys are going to do when they become men and have estates and big gardens! They are going to have lodges covered with roses and honeysuckle, and geraniums on the window sills, and gardeners standing at the gates to invite everybody in, and lovely printed notices asking people to assist in protecting the shrubbery.

If the one-tenth of their dreams come true, it will be a sight to see. But I fancy the gardeners that will be content to act as tourist conductors and freefooder pilgrims' guides are not yet born, and the notice boards will be targets for stones or firewood for picnickers. But however much the owners of these estates may be disappointed, they will never dream, I am sure, of taking a little boy to court for stealing a bluebell, or sending an old woman to jail for rooting up a primrose. If Adam could not refrain from forbidden fruit, though he owned all the rest of Paradise, can we wonder at a little town-bred laddie plucking a gooseberry the first time he sees one, to his amazement, actually growing on a bush?

REASONS FOR NOT GOING TO CHURCH. IX.

THIS lady has not gone to church since her husband died six months ago; she fears the associations connected with the pew in which they sat—somewhat infrequently it must be confessed—would be simply overwhelming. But she has taken a season ticket for the Winter Subscription Concerts, and has happily secured, by special favour of the Directors, the two seats he and she occupied last year. It will be such a solemn pleasure to her, she says, to have him once more in imagination so close beside her, and especially to-night, when it is to be Beethoven's Eighth Symphony, a particular favourite of his, in which, as he used to say, the bassoon is so gloriously immortalised.

The Morning Hours are Best

Mr. Holman Hunt, one of the greatest painters of modern times, tells us in his autobiography that one summer evening, when he was a lad, he was running up the spiral staircase that led to one of the Academy School-rooms in Trafalgar Square, three steps at a time, when he suddenly found himself overtaking Mr. Etty, a distinguished Royal Academician, then about sixty years of age, who was painfully labouring ahead of him. "It was with a feeling of shame," says Mr. Hunt, "that I found I had disturbed his toilsome climbing. I was too late to retreat, for he turned and saw me. I made my gentlest salutation to him, the more reverently, seeing that his infirmity did not quench his ardent habitual effort. He could scarcely speak, but stood aside and made signs for me to pass. I apologised, saying I would follow. Beckoning me close to him, he said, as he put his hand upon my shoulder: 'Go on. I insist! *Your time is more precious than mine.*' I felt sure that he wished me to take him at his word, and I obeyed accordingly."

From every point of view that is a charming story, and it is a very solemn one. Few men used time more diligently than Mr. Etty, for he continued to be a student and a learner all his days, and yet the young scholar's time *was* the more precious after all. These were his morning hours.

The Morning Hours are Best

They have a curious and beautiful old custom at Magdalen College, Oxford. Every first of May, at five o'clock in the morning, the choristers sing a Latin hymn from the top of the College Tower. Here is the first verse of it :

Te Deum Patrem colimus,
Te laudibus prosequimur,
Qui corpus cibo reficis,
Coelesti mentem gratia.

Thee God our Father we adore,
With praises Thee extol,
Who dost our frame with food restore,
With heavenly grace our soul.

It is a good thing to bid the summer welcome, and to do it early, if only you do it wisely and in the fear and love of God. The month of May is specially the month of promise, and every promise comes from God. It is one of the national sins of Scotland, by no means our worst, but a big enough sin for all that, that many people are afraid to marry in May, because they say it is "unlucky." The man or woman who thinks *that*, is not fit to marry in any month. There is no such thing as luck ; there is one living and true God and Father of all, Who is over all, and through all, and in all. If it is God's will that some day you should marry, as I hope it is, try if at all possible to make May your wedding month, and remember to ask Christ to come to the marriage and stay with you ever after. I have said all this to you before, and may say it yet again ! but I am anxious to do all I can to destroy this foolish, wicked superstition and so help to take away a reproach from our beloved land.

They do well who rise early on May-morning, but they do better who rise early every morning, and they do best who rise without being called. Have you ever noticed how often we are told the heroes of the Bible "rose early in the morning?" That phrase means that they set their minds, as we set alarums in our clocks, the night before, and their bodies had learnt to obey, just as a horse obeys its rider. And here, as in all other things, our Lord and Saviour is our chief example, for we read of Him rising not only early but "a great while before day," and all who love Him and bear Him company will share with Him "the morning star."

Shamgar and Cyrus

Old Mrs. Craigieson had called her cat Shamgar because she wished to do honour to that Hebrew judge.* She had a notion that the saints whose names and deeds and writings are given us in the Bible must hear how often they are spoken about on earth. She thought it possible that every Sabbath a list might be put up in heaven of all the texts that had been preached from on earth that day, and she wondered how Paul or John would feel when they met, for example, Zephaniah after they had heard that tens of thousands of texts had been chosen, as usual, from their writings, while the figures of his list stood almost unaltered week after week. "I'll do my best to make up for the neglect of others," she would say, and so, while she read Paul and John and Isaiah too, she would often turn to a minor prophet as she would have done had she been a great lady in a drawing-room, to a little noticed guest, "to give more abundant honour to that part which lacked."

Shamgar accordingly became one of her favourites. Many a sermon she had heard on Gideon and Barak and Samson and Jephthah, or many a reference at least made to them when time to say more had failed the preacher, but never once, she would say, had she ever heard Shamgar even mentioned. Yet surely he was a right

* Judges iii. 31.

brave man, for in the days when the highways were unoccupied, and the few travellers there were slinking through byways, and women drew water from the wells in fear and trembling because there might be archers lurking among the reeds hard by, Shamgar played the man. And when others would not fight, because they had neither shield nor spear nor sword nor bow, did not he take just what he had, and what lay to everybody's hand, and with nothing but an ox-goad, a common piece of wood with a nail fastened to its end, slay six hundred Philistines and deliver Israel ?

One day when I called on her I was surprised to find Mrs. Craigieson looking "put about." She was angry at Shamgar ! A friend had given her a lovely Persian kitten—whom she named Cyrus—you know the poet Southey's remark, that to be perfect a house should have a child rising three years and a kitten six weeks old ?—and Shamgar had taken the huff through jealousy just as if he had been an ordinary Christian man or woman. He would take no food, but sat sulking at the door, looking into the cold north wind with watery eyes, and he was ten years old, too, an age at which one is expected to have at least some sense. Cyrus, like his great namesake in his boyhood, was fond of sports and eager to make friends to share his games, but Shamgar would have none of him and resented all approaches. In the evening, cold and hungry, he would come and sit on his little stool, "gazing at the fuffing lowe" but with a hard and unforgiving face. And then, all of a sudden, he

would step down towards his sleeping enemy, and wrathfully slap him with his paw on the side of his head, and then resume his perch and his vindictive, melancholy meditations.

"And to think," said Mrs. Craigieson plaintively, "he has attended family worship, and joined in the singing, too, night and morning, these ten years!"

"Yes, she was going to Canada;" so she told me a few months afterwards. Her daughters were married there and their husbands hitherto had not been friendly to her; now they wished her to come, and though she loved the place she had lived in all her days, and feared the sea, she had made up her mind to go. Only, it had been after much prayer to God, for, if she knew her own heart—and that is never an easy thing to do—she had asked Him to guide her and make her path plain, and the way seemed to have opened up. And one of the things that had helped her not a little was the behaviour of her two cats, Shamgar and Cyrus, both to one another and to her. "They have become great friends," she said, "and vie with one another only in showing how fond they are of me, and one of them sits on my one shoulder and the other on the other—and Shamgar is getting pretty heavy, for he is taking his porridge again—and they purr and lick my cheeks and my ears. But what pleases me most is this, they are wonderfully happy and contented looking from morning to night, and don't you think that if I was going where God did not want me to go, He would send His Angel to block the way as He did to Balaam,

and whether I saw the Angel or not, Shamgar and Cyrus would see him just as Balaam's Ass did, and they would show me by the state they were in that there was something wrong, someone placing himself in the way for an adversary against me? You believe that that story about Balaam and the Ass is true, don't you?"

"Most certainly I do, with all my heart."

"And you don't think I am guilty of heresy in saying what I have said? Can God not deliver me as He did Israel by the hand of Shamgar? and can He not anoint my little Cyrus with wisdom and stir up his spirit as He did to Cyrus the Persian long ago? Isn't there a passage somewhere that says that?"

"Ay, it's in Isaiah, 45th chapter: 'For Jacob My servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee though thou hast not known Me: that they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside Me: I am the Lord, and there is none else.'"

Willie Hamilton's Reward

"Every good gift and every perfect boon is from above, coming down from the Father of lights."—James i. 17 (R.V.)

"He hath made everything beautiful in its time."—Eccles. iii. 11 (R.V.)

As long as old Mr. Goodshaw was living the little grass lawn in front of his cottage was kept in perfect order. He cut it twice and often three times a week, and when he had nothing else to do he would roll it up and down and across and across. It was sixteen yards long, and ten broad, and, had he been young, to cut and pare the edges would have taken him less than half-an-hour. As he got older it took him longer. Being an accurate, methodical man he always kept note of the time, just as Prof. Sir Robert Christison of Edinburgh kept a record of the time he spent in taking his favourite walk from the College Gate to the top of Arthur's Seat.

"Well, how long to-day?" Mrs. Goodshaw would say.

"Exactly an hour and twenty minutes, ten minutes more than last year, and if it goes on increasing at the same rate, it will soon be a whole day's work, and if I live long enough, a whole month's!"

The last time of cutting for the year, usually early in November, was always a solemn day to him. He took great pains with it. It made the

place look tidy all winter when it was well done, he would say, and then he would add, "I wonder if I'll ever do it again?"

After her husband's death Mrs. Goodshaw, who had the same orderly ways, tried always, for his sake, to have the little lawn nicely done before winter set in. But in the year of which I am writing there had been unusually heavy rains most of September and October, and the grass of the little plot began to have an unkempt look and that made her fret. Then the young man, her neighbour, who always did it for her, and did it willingly, turned ill. "Oh dear!" she would say, "I wonder what he would have said if he had seen the state it's in?"

In the middle of October there came a week with a strong drying wind from the north and not a drop of rain, and the green looked worse than ever. And now Saturday had come, and though there was frost her rheumatism told her the rain was on its way back again.

The children round about were all going to the hills that day on the chance of getting brambles. Willie Hamilton was going too, as soon as his mother had done her early shopping. When she came in she said, "I'm so sorry for old Mrs. Goodshaw, she's in such distress about that plot of hers. It's a pity old people get into such a state about things, but I suppose it can't be helped. You couldn't do it for her, Willie? It will keep you from going for the brambles, but it would please the old body. I did one or two things myself for an old body like her when I was a girl, and there are few things now I have

more satisfaction in looking back upon. It would please me as well as her, real well, Willie, if you would do it."

The grass was long and the mower was blunt, and Willie had never worked one before. But he did his best, though it took him two hours, and the marks of the knives were here and there in evidence. He had no broom to brush it with, but he used a rake. Before the raking was done, the frost " took the air," as they say, and the rain began to come down, as did also showers of leaves from a lime and a weeping ash in the adjoining plot. But still he stuck to his work; and then he tried the roller. It was heavy enough for him, but Willie was of the tribe of " never say die," and he pushed, and tugged, and better tugged, and rolled away.

While he was resting a little, the sweat pouring off him, who should pass by but young Mr. Ransom, then a designer, but afterwards partner in the firm of Credell Credells Ransom & Credell, the great carpet people. He had been asked to suggest a pattern for a carpet for one of the chief rooms in the addition the young laird was making to the castle. Seeing the little lad blowing like " puffing Billie," he stopped and spoke to him, and while he was speaking, suddenly noticed that the wet leaves and grass sticking on the roller had formed the loveliest design in soft green with the delicate autumn tints of gold and amber and russet brown. " Hold on a minute, please," he cried, " don't move the roller till I've made a sketch of it. I've got the very idea I have been hunting for all the week ! "

The bramble-gatherers came home drenched, with a few small berries and many large scratches, but they had some good fun all the same.

Mr. Ransom gave Willie a whole sixpence to himself, which I am glad to say went into the Savings Bank that same night along with other twelve ha'pennies he had been laboriously accumulating for some weeks. Mr. Ransom, further, having heard the whole story of that morning's work, brought Willie's mother a pretty little shawl after he got word that her "son's design," as he called it, had been accepted in preference to other three that Lady Jean had got from Kensington. But what pleased Willie most, and stuck longest in his memory, were the tears of joy that ran down Mrs. Goodshaw's cheeks when she stood on the front steps as he was taking away the roller to its place, and said, "It is just beautiful! Oh but I'm glad! oh but I'm glad! Am I not the glad woman this night!"

REASONS FOR NOT GOING TO CHURCH. X.

NEITHER of these Rugby football three-quarter backs goes to Church now. The one who has just kicked the ball—and he did it very cleverly—doesn't go because the minister's voice jars on his nerves and gives him headache, so he says. And the one who tackled him won't go, because a few Sabbaths ago "one of the elders pushed rudely past him in the porch."

A Story of Leap Year

One wet autumn many years ago, when farmers were sorely tempted to carry in their grain on one or two dry Sabbaths, our minister preached from the text, "Six days thou shalt work, but on the seventh day thou shalt rest: in earing (that is, in ploughing) time and in harvest thou shalt rest." He told the farmers that God had foreseen their difficulty and that He knew the greatness of the trial, but them that honoured Him He would honour. And he told us all never to say, "I am so busy I haven't time to say my prayers this morning." The busier we are, he said, the more need we had to ask God to come with us and help us. One of the farmers, I remember, said the minister didn't know what he was talking about, and if the rain kept on, and next Sabbath happened to be the first good day, he would work himself and make every man, woman and child about the place work too. All which in due time he did, and some of his neighbours envied him on the Monday, but it was he who envied them on the Tuesday when he saw them all "leading" as hard as they could on the finest day of the season, while he and his men were taking their stacks smoking with heat all down again.

When Mrs. Paxton's husband was dying he said to his young wife, "You'll have a big struggle my lass, but I know you'll do your best. Keep out of debt, and never apply to the Board.

Bring the weans up to be brave and honest, take them to church every Sabbath ; and try to have family worship every morning and every night. We have had it these ten years, and there's no reason for stopping it though I'm away from you. We'll still be a family, in heaven and on earth. But I know I didn't need to say that to you. You'll do your best, and maybe the Angels will tell me now and again how you are getting on. But whether or no, I know it will be well with you, and I'll be as sure of that yonder as I am here."

And she, poor woman, did have a struggle, but she was never beat, though she was very near it several times, and once especially.

Work that winter was very scarce in the city, and when in reply to her answer to an advertisement Mrs. Paxton got eighteen dozen blouses to "finish," she counted herself a lucky woman. The pay, no doubt, was small, so small that you would not believe it if I told you. But it was the conditions that were attached that made the bargain a particularly cruel one. She was shown one of the blouses in the state in which she was to get them, and another as they were to be when finished. They were to be all ready by 6 p.m. on the last day of the month ; for every unfinished blouse, and for every spoilt or unsatisfactory one—of which Jasper Evans, Esq.,—(whoever he was)—was to be sole judge, she was to be fined 2s. "Take them or want them," she was told when she hesitated, "we have over thirty applications from other women who will be glad to get the work to do."

"I'll take them," she said, after a brief calculation in her mind, "and I'll sign the conditions if you insist on it, though I never knew of such a thing being done before."

She got on fairly well with the first four or five dozen, though even these needed more work than the sample shown her. But the next package, and the next, and the next—oh dear! And now to-morrow was the last day of the month. She had forgotten when she made the promise, and they had not reminded her, how short the month of February is. There was nothing for her to do but to sit up all night. But she and her children had worship all the same before they were put to bed. The Psalm that came up that night in ordinary course for singing, was the 31st, at the 15th verse:

> My times are wholly in Thy hand:
> Do Thou deliver me
> From their hand that mine enemies
> And persecutors be.

When morning came, she saw her task to be impossible. For a moment she thought of doing without worship, and I for one could not have blamed her. To continue sewing, however, was impossible, so great was her agitation.

"It can't be done, and I needn't try it," she said, "and I'll have more to pay in fines than I'll get in wages. Oh but it's hard!"

It seemed, indeed, as if all the billows were going over her head, for when she asked the children to come for worship, the Bible she always used, and had used the night before, was not to be found! and seeking for it lost her another

precious five minutes. "Just bring the big one off the 'drawers' head,'" she said at last. And they sang the verses beginning:

Let me not be ashamed, O Lord,
For on Thee called I have.

As she was closing the book before kneeling in prayer—for she followed her husband's plan, first reading a few verses of a chapter, then singing, then praying—an old copy of the Shorter Catechism fell out of it and went under the table. When the prayer was over—and it was a very despondent one—her youngest child picked the Catechism up, and looking at the outside of the brownish yellow cover, said, "Look, mother." There was a *Grace before Meat* on it and a *Grace after Meat*, and a Multiplication Table. The sight of these things brought back old times to her, and smiling through her tears she opened the little book, and on the other side of the cover saw the old familiar tables—12 inches=1 foot, and so on, and so on. And then there were six lines of rhyme:

Thirty days have September,
April, June and November.
All the rest have thirty-one,
Saving February alone,
Which has twenty-eight days clear,
And twenty-nine in each Leap Year.

"Leap Year!" she cried. "And this is Leap Year, and I had forgotten all about it! I've got another day! I'll manage them yet!"

And manage them she did, and with two hours to spare. But if you had seen Mr. Cradish's face when she said, "That's the lot!" He was a

big, burly, impudent man, but was so much taken aback that he could hardly speak. He had hoped, if not to take money from her, at least to bully her into asking none. But he had still one string to his bow. Leaving the room he returned with a note from Mr. Jasper Evans, "though I don't believe there was no such person," declaring that 4s. was to be deducted from her pay, several of the blouses not being up to sample.

The closing verses of the 31st Psalm served Mrs. Paxton and her children well these last two days. When she returned from the shop they sang:

O love the Lord, all ye His saints;
Because the Lord doth guard
The faithful, and He plenteously
Proud doers doth reward.

"That second line is true," she said, "and we must make the first one true too, and if that man doesn't mend his ways, though I hope he will, perhaps he'll see the last line come true, too."

Messrs. Cradish and Griggsby's Spring Sale was a greater success even than they had hoped. The Wholesale Birmingham Warehouse's bankrupt stock which they had bought, and the fifty dozen Paris made blouses, as they described them in their advertisements, went off like smoke. On the second day of the sale it was announced that the blouses at 1s. 11¾d. were all gone, but that a new supply had been ordered by telegram, and that these would be ready next day at 2s. 5½d. each, a figure which they declared it would be impossible to repeat. Indeed, they said, these were to be sold at a loss simply to

avoid disappointing their friends and patrons and the public generally.

And verily the Firm had their reward. Their name became a household word. In four years Mr. Cradish had set up his carriage and pair and was bringing up his two sons as gentlemen. In other four he bought out Mr. Griggsby for £30,000, and duly advertised the fact. Then the tide turned. The two young gentlemen proved proper rascals, their father's health gave way, and the names of other firms became household words in turn. And now if you say "Cradish & Griggsby" in company, it is only people that are over fifty that remember them. "Cradish & Griggsby! Hold on a minute! I've heard that name. Let me see! Cradish, Cradish—oh, yes, now I remember! That's the man that used to give the grandest balls in the city, and I think, I think I heard that when he died he had a little shop for selling remnants somewhere in the south of England; and there was an ugly story about his partner too, but I can't remember what it was; something to do with gambling." Yes,

He plenteously
Proud doers doth reward.

Mother Crow's Experience

THERE was a rookery in the Gartfern Woods, and from the topmost branches of the tall trees the rooks had a fine view. They could see the quaint little town lying near them, with its square church tower. Beyond that a line of green bent and yellow sands, with reefs of jagged rocks here and there, and then the sea. Looking inland, woods and fields stretched away to a green hill, with villages sheltering under the shadow of the woods, and in the fields in the happy harvest time wonderful crops of barley and wheat, enough to delight the heart of any crow. The crows did not roost in the rookery in winter. I fancy that would have been too breezy ; but when March came they always returned to it, and took possession of the old nests. How excited they were ! How angry ! Strange that birds living in a community as rooks do should be so very quarrelsome ! They were continually fighting and scolding and stealing sticks from one another's nests. Yet if a pair, who seemed to desire a little more quietness, went off and built their nest apart from the hubbub, it was destroyed again and again by the others until they were obliged to return to the rookery.

There was plenty of food to be had in the rich fields round about, grubs, and worms, and corn ; the summer, too, had been a fine one, but old Mother Crow did not seem happy as she sat

disconsolately on the topmost bars of the gate leading into Farmer Blair's ten-acre field. Indeed, she felt very sad. She had had a great many broods. I cannot say how many, but she had had one every year, and I know she remembered the great storm of April, 1841, when all the nests in the rookery had been blown down and the young crows destroyed. That was a terrible time. It was her first brood. She had lost them all and had received a great deal of sympathy. But that calamity had not been her own doing. Since then her children had not turned out well, and she felt she was herself to blame. It was this that made her sad. Summer after summer they had been self-willed and disobedient and she had not restrained them. It would take too long to tell all her sad experience, the past summer's will be enough.

She had four fine little rooks, Jackie and Bill, and Blackie and Screamchen, and as usual she was devoted to the work of feeding them. While she was off searching for food, the first two became very fond of balancing themselves on the edge of the nest. They were too young to indulge in such gymnastic feats with safety; so each time the mother on her return found them doing so, she always said, "You are not to do that. I shall have to peck you if I find you doing it again." She, however, did not peck them, although she repeatedly found them doing it, and one day they fell over and broke their necks. Oh, the horror she felt, when, on returning with a fat worm, only two little voices greeted her. "Jackie and Bill fell over! Give us the worm."

There on the ground, fifty feet below, lay her darlings with gaping mouths and glazed eyes, the victims of their own disobedience and her indulgence.

As the summer came on and the remaining two were fledged, Blackie stayed out late at night. "You'll be eaten up, I warn you," said his mother, but he thought she said so just to frighten him ; he wasn't afraid, oh, no ! not till he saw a cat's eyes glaring at him, and felt the clutch of her sharp claws. How he wished then he was safe in the old nest ? "I should have punished him," sighed his mother, as she watched in the gloaming for his return. But, alas ! he never came,

So Screamchen was left alone in the nest, but instead of being kind to her mother, and comforting her for the loss of her three brothers, she went gadding about all day long with some of her young neighbours, who were really leading her into very dangerous ground.

"Poor thing," said her mother, excusing her, "it is so lonely for her at home now, you can't wonder at her liking to go with her young friends." "But don't you know," croaked an old neighbour, "that they go every day to Farmer Blair's corn, and they say he is having delicious crow pies with the young crows he shoots ? "

"I have forbidden her to go there," said her mother.

When Screamchen came home her mother said, "Screamchen, dear, you must *not* go to Farmer Blair's corn. I told you so before ; I hear he is shooting the young crows there and making pies."

"Oh, mother," said Screamchen, "you are getting such a nervous old creature. Why, it's only an old scarecrow that's in the field. We've had such fun with it. We flew all round it and Carry Crow lighted on its hat."

"Still, Screamchen, dear, I wish you would not go, and if I hear of you being there again I must speak to your father."

Screamchen did not care in the least for her mother's threat, and in the afternoon, as she and some others were having a fine time in the young corn, Bang! Bang! went the farmer's gun, and Screamchen lay dead on the field.

No wonder the old mother was sad as she sat on the gate and viewed the scene. "I blame myself only," she said. "I hope no other mother will suffer as I now do, and if I thought the story of my experience would be a warning to parents who do not punish their children when they are disobedient, I would go home and write it, though my heart is like to break, and send it to the *Crow's Chronicle*, and perhaps the Editor would print it."

Erchetai Nux

ἔρχεται νύξ.

A FEW weeks ago a clock was put up in one of our Greenock churches in memory of an elder, held high in honour, who died a good many years ago. On the base of the clock are printed the two strange-looking words in capital letters that are in the first line at the head of this article. The second line contains the same words, only in smaller letters.

On the Sabbath after, the minister told his people that these were the words which Dr. Samuel Johnson got engraved on the face of his watch, and Sir Walter Scott had put them on the dial in his garden at Abbotsford, and the great and godly Robert M'Cheyne of Dundee had also used them as his seal. Further, he told them that they were words uttered by our Lord, and that they were taken from John ix. 4, *the night cometh*. A common clock, he told them, too, tells us simply what the time is, but this one, whose motto was a message in our Saviour's own words, was meant to tell us what *Time itself* is—the road and the borderland to Eternity, the season in which we are to ask Christ to work His work in us, that work of our salvation which it is His joy and His honour and His glory to do.

Next he told them that the first word means *cometh*, and that it is pronounced e r ch ĕ t a i, the third letter in it like our X being the Greek for ch, the letter with which the name *Ch*rist begins ; and that the second word was n u x, pronounced *nooks*, and that it was the same as the Latin word *nox*, from which comes our word *nocturnal*, which means *night*.

Lastly he told them that the words were printed in Greek and not in English, in order that by their strange look they might the more readily arrest attention, specially from strangers, and make them think, and put questions, and receive courteous and wise answers ; but that they were put there, above all, according to the wise custom of our forefathers, who loved to put Greek and Latin mottoes on their houses and their schools, to stir the imagination of the young, and make them eager to be scholars, and fond to know Greek, which is the noblest language that ever was, the one that was chosen and prepared by God for the unfolding of the eternal purpose of His love to us through Jesus Christ.

On the Tuesday after, a young man in the congregation, who is on the staff of our Town's Gas Office, who had said the words over and over again on the Sabbath evening to fix them in his mind, had occasion to call at a house whose occupants, a woman and her little boy, had what he took to be an Italian name. Our town, like so many others in Scotland, is overrun with those Italian shops which no wise boy or girl will ever once enter. " No," said the boy, " we are Greeks, not Italians."

The young man, finding some difficulty in examining the meter, for the short December day was far spent, struck a match, but instead of saying, "*It's getting dark*," as he would have done in ordinary circumstances, happily bethought himself of speaking Greek as the Apostle Paul did on a great occasion, and said, "*Erchetai Nux*"—to the great delight of the woman, to whom these words in her own tongue in a foreign land were as cold waters to a thirsty soul.

I know a man who, as he was going up the steps of his hotel in Rio Janeiro overheard, with a joy that lasts to this day, one man say to another," as *Logic Bob* used to say." Logic Bob was the name the students used to give to a Professor Buchanan, who once held and adorned the chair of Logic and Rhetoric in Glasgow University. And these two words, as you may guess, led to an instant and happy introduction.

So was it with this woman and our Greek friend, who, ere she knew it, was brought, in a sense, like her famous compatriots of old, into the presence of Jesus. Using her little boy as interpreter, she heard the story of the words.

Everything good that one learns in this world comes in handy some time or other. Keep a thing seven years, the old folks used to say, and you will find a use for it. But here was a lad who realised his investment of knowledge—two seemingly small fishes, yet fishes in which the name of Christ may be seen—with interest before forty-eight hours had passed! And he was not a moment too soon, for by the Friday after, the Greeks had left our town. But who can say how

many these fishes may feed, and how many baskets full of fragments there may be taken up besides ?

" I must work the works of Him that sent Me, while it is day : the night cometh when no man can work."

Woodcock

In order to be a woodcock one needs to know a little astronomy and a great deal more of practical geography than is taught in any of our schools. Some knowledge of mathematics, too, is required; one must have gone as far as the first proposition of Euclid, and know how to describe an equilateral triangle. For, in the pairing season, every woodcock who wishes to have a mate, describes, day after day, equilateral triangles in the air with sides a quarter of a mile long. Whether he does it Euclid's way—by first describing two circles which intersect each other at C and then joining AC and BC, or not, I do not know, but he certainly makes the triangles, which is the thing that has got to be done, and makes them musically too, and enjoys his work, which is more than can be said of any student in my time.

Mother Woodcock was a fine teacher. Her husband landed in Scotland one Sabbath morning in a garden in Kirkcaldy, exhausted by battling with contrary winds that had caught him in the North Sea. After a few hours rest and sleep he made his way to Stirlingshire, and lived in Silverhill, delighting especially in the holly bushes. He married in March and he and his wife had three little beauties born to them. Most things she taught her children by her own example. For instance, the mud that was

squeezed out at the side of her long bill when she ate the worms—and she ate hundreds every night—she washed carefully away in running water, just as all wise people amongst ourselves carefully cleanse their teeth after every meal and so prolong their days, and live to do their appointed work. Her children, too, learned to beat the ground with their feet and bills to find out where the worms were. Other things she let them find out for themselves, as, for example, that it is bad for the feathers to fly straight before the wind, and much better to go sideways to it. But there were many things she could not tell them, for she did not know herself.

Woodcocks carry their little ones high up in the air, pressing them close to their breast, and a wonderful sight it is.

One day Mother Woodcock had been telling her little son about the angels, for the Bible tells us that beasts and birds have dealings with them as well as with God. She could tell him many things about them, but he quickly put questions that puzzled her.

"Are there many of them, mother?"

"Yes, thousands of thousands, more than can be counted."

"Do they sleep during the day like us?"

"No, they rest not day nor night."

"What do they do?"

"They are flying up and down from earth to heaven, and back again, continually."

"Do they fly zig-zag like us?"

"No, they turn not as they go: they go every one of them straight forward."

"But if there are so many of them and we don't see them, are we not in their way sometimes?"

"No doubt."

"Then, if they are not to knock against us, will they not have to fly zig-zag after all?"

"My dear, they are not made of flesh and blood like us, but even if they were they would not grudge going out of their way to oblige a little bird."

Another day, when the little ones had been carried, one at a time, through the air, the boy said, "Do you like carrying me, mother?"

"Dearly."

"I am getting pretty heavy, am I not?"

"Yes, you are a great, big, heavy boy."

"Do the angels ever carry anyone through the air?"

"Yes, when people die the angels carry their souls to heaven."

"How do they do it?"

"I don't know."

"Do men know?"

"I don't think they do. They never think about angels.

"But if the angels do as much for them as you do for me, I am sure I would love them, and I would try to find out all I could about them; that is, if I were a man."

"Maybe not."

"Then I am glad I am not a man."

REASONS FOR NOT GOING TO CHURCH. XI.

THIS man does not go to Church because "the children who sit in the pew behind him sing so loud, and they don't sing in tune either——"

Sir Colin Campbell

"I know whom I have believed."—2 Tim. i. 12.

THE first news of the Indian Mutiny reached London on the 11th July, 1857. At three o'clock in the afternoon Sir Colin Campbell, afterwards Lord Clyde, who had been overtaken in the street by a messenger, was offered the command of the forces in India, and had instantly accepted it hoping, as he said, soon to return to England to pass a little time with the few friends who might be left to him. He was then in his sixty-fifth year, and suffered from the effects of the wounds he had received and the hardships he had undergone in the great wars of previous years. He started next day for India, at half-past eight in the evening, landed in Calcutta on the 15th August and took command of the army near Lucknow on the 13th November.

On the morning of that day a memorable circumstance happened. The troops had been arranged in Brigades, and as he passed in front of each body of men, addressing a few words to each, it was noticed he was received in silence, though with all due respect. Only a few men belonging to the Artillery had seen him before. The Sikhs, and other native soldiers, who had remained loyal, eyed him very closely. They had heard of his long and honourable career, and the man in whose hands their lives were to be

during the coming fights and battles was naturally an object of great interest to them. But they, too, kept silence, for he was personally unknown to them. But when he came to the end of the line to review the last Brigade, he was received with tumultous shouts and cheers, the men waving their feather bonnets in the air. It was *the 93rd Regiment* that stood before him, and they knew him well. It was they who had formed the "thin red line" at Balaklava only three years before.

You have all heard of it. Sir Colin with the Highland Brigade five hundred strong, and several battalions of Turks, had charge of the gorge that led to the harbour of Balaklava. On the 25th October, 1854, a great body of Russian cavalry suddenly came down on them. The Turks turned and fled, crying "Ship! Ship!" In ordinary circumstances the Highlanders would have been formed into a hollow square, with bayonets bristling out on every side, as is usual in preparing for cavalry. But on this occasion they were simply formed into a line two deep. It was a solemn moment. So much depended on the steadiness of that one regiment!

"Remember," said Campbell, as he rode along the line, "remember there is no retreat from here, men! You must die where you stand!"

And the men answered, "Ay, ay, Sir Colin; we'll dae that."

There was an old porter who kept the Greek class-room door in my day in the old College in High Street, Glasgow. We used to watch him

straighten himself and make the military salute as our Professor turned round the corner into the gloomy old arch-way on those foggy mornings years ago. One day the old porter didn't notice the Professor, and gave no salute. He saw his mistake a moment too late, but he straightened himself up all the same, and—smiled ! as he gazed at the Professor's back. That was the only time I ever saw the sad solemn look he always had pass from his face. He had been one of that thin red line. I remember the words he used as he once told me the story of the famous day: "When we got the command to form line, I took my last look at the sun."

I hope all of you are obeying Christ so loyally, and finding Him to be such a great Leader and Commander, and such a good Master, that in days to come, when He asks you to follow Him on greater enterprises, you will obey Him not only instantly but joyfully, as those who know that under Him a battle has always been, and always will be, a victory.

A Holiday

"Send portions to them for whom nothing is prepared."

A HOLIDAY is often a dark time of the year. There are some who say, "Why, it is Fair time, New Year time—a little latitude is allowed then." There are many who look forward hopefully to being tempted and deliberately go where temptations abound. Even good people spoil their holiday by not beginning well.

I wish I could take it for granted we all have family worship every morning. I have often told you you can have it in three minutes. Many good people are always in an unnecessary bustle when starting on a holiday. There are children to be made ready, food to prepare, things to be found, parcels to be tied up, and at the last moment they say, "We haven't time for prayers this morning." Yet, if there is any morning we need to pray, it is the morning of a holiday.

It is a great blessing to have the yoke taken off our necks; not to have to go to one's work; and to see other folks' faces happy. There is no one whose work is not infected by the sin of Eden, and a holiday is meant to be a reminder of it, and a foretaste of heaven, where there will be work without pain of sin. It is well to start on a holiday as calmly as may be, leaving everything in order, preparing diligently, hopefully, joyfully beforehand and *taking God with you*. It is

one of the mysteries of the Divine Nature that He has as many thoughts as there are beings in the Universe. It is strange for us to be at a funeral and a wedding in one day. We don't like to be merry when others are sad. But who can estimate the anguish God suffers every day and every night? People sinning, people ruined, people dying unrepentant, and yet He can rejoice with us and He bids us be glad.

First we should choose wisely the place of resort.

"What makes you go to such and such a place?" That is a question some men would hardly dare to answer.

And wherever you go you should set up an altar. Pray for your fellow travellers. Pray for the unknown man you meet coming along the road. You have interesting experiences, see great sights, look on things with a new vision. You sit down together on the green grass, preparing a meal, a table spread under the blue sky and near the sounding sea. These are moments of great joy. And then bring God home with you. There is the gathering up of your belongings, your last look as the road dips down behind the hill. There are the innumerable courtesies that God puts in the way of those willing to be kind. The weary mother to help, the worn-out little ones to carry, the flowers to give away. Then there is the glad return home—the little home that is your own and so sweet—the fire that mother is never too tired to kindle. Do you feel glad it is all over? Yes, but you have laid foundations of a lifetime of happy memories.

Your children will talk to other children of the boat they were in, and the waves, and the gulls, and the roses you saw in the gardens. You come home to face work—for this is not your rest—but you have had a glimpse of heaven. You have had a happy day and a holy day, and you would like to go back again. It is past for another year. It may be for the last time!

But you can send portions to some for whom nothing is prepared. There are lonely folk who must needs cry when they think of the past. Father and mother are gone! It is no pleasure to them to go anywhere. There are poor little children to whom the sight of even a dandelion is a wonder and delight. There are sick folk to go and see, carrying to them some tribute from the seashore or the leafy woods.

That is the best part of a holiday, and that part remains.

"Stonewall" Jackson

General "Stonewall" Jackson was killed, shot accidentally by his own men, on the 2nd of May, 1863.

There never was a braver soldier and there have been few better men. He was one of the Confederate leaders in the American Civil War, and though he fought, unhappily, on the wrong side, it was not from hatred to the slaves, for he was kind to them—he set up a school for them that continues to this day—but from a mistaken view of his duty to his native State, Virginia. His mother, a saintly woman, died when he was ten. His own life was despaired of when he was fifteen, but he was determined to live, and he lived! Becoming a soldier, he was promoted on the field for gallantry, in a war with Mexico. But it was at the Battle of Bull Run that he sprang into fame. It was there he got the name by which he will be for ever known in history. A General Bee, trying in vain to stop some troops who were retreating, cried out to them, "Look at Jackson's Brigade! It is standing like a stone wall." So Stonewall Jackson he became. He was very tall and erect, and had curiously flashing blue eyes. He kept the strictest discipline, yet his men loved him and would do anything for him. If "old Jack" was with them there could be no failure and no mistake. Such almost incredible distances did they often march

in one day that they were called Stonewall's foot cavalry. He himself never shunned fatigue, and shirked no dangers. To encourage his men when things looked desperate, he would go and stand unmoved in places where it seemed impossible that a man could live for one instant. "Beat the rally," he once cried to a drummer boy, when a regiment was fleeing in disorder, and beat the rally the poor boy did amid a storm of shot and shell, for his general came beside him, and just laid his strong hand on his shoulder. At Harper's Ferry he captured 12,000 of the enemy by a series of brilliant movements, and as he rode amongst them after the surrender they crowded after him and cheered him.

Once riding through a field of grain under stress of circumstances, he was challenged by the furious owner. "Who are you? What is your name?" the man cried. "My name is Jackson." "Jackson! Stonewall Jackson?" "Yes, Sir." "Then go back and ride over my field again, ride over every inch of it!"

He was a staunch Presbyterian, and a great lover of the Sabbath day. He never posted letters on Saturdays unless he was sure they would reach their destination that night; he would wait, no matter how it inconvenienced him, till Monday. Wise boys and girls who wish to honour God will do the same. His troops knew that he did all he could to keep the Sabbath, as if he were living at home in time of peace. "Remember the powder," he once said to a Colonel, "and don't bring that stuff you got on the Sabbath day." He was scrupulously

accurate in all he said. He would walk a mile in pouring rain to correct a little slip he had made in a matter of little moment, and he was truthful in big things as well. He prayed much always, but specially before a battle. "Gwine to be a fight, sartin," his negro servant would say. "Massa's been a-praying all night." And during battle, too, he prayed. As he sat on his horse his men would often look at one another, for they saw him lifting up his right hand for a moment or two, and they all knew what *that* meant.

Indeed, he seemed to pray almost without ceasing. He had so fixed the habit of it in his mind, as he once told a friend in confidence who questioned him, that he never took a drink of water, or sealed a letter, or opened one, without asking God's blessing; nor did he ever dismiss the young officers in the military school without praying for them. He was as wise as he was brave and good. He was a brilliant strategist. No enemy could divine his plans. "If I thought my coat knew what I intended to do," he once said, "I would take it off and burn it." Is it any wonder that his troops were unconquerable? Lord Wolseley, who was with them for a time during the wars, says they had unbounded confidence in their God-fearing leader, and he in his turn trusted them and believed they could accomplish anything.

He had gone out one night to observe the enemy's position at a critical moment in the war, near a place called Chancellorsville, and was returning—a quartz rock marks the very spot—when some of his men, not knowing he had gone

ahead, took him and the handful of men with him for enemies, and fired. Three bullets struck him; one pierced his left hand, another pierced his right, and a third shattered the left arm above the elbow. From that hour the star of the Confederacy began to wane. He lingered for eight days, watched by his wife, amid the tears and prayers of all the Southern States. "All is for the best," he would say, "it is God's doing." When the end was near, his mind wandered to the battlefield. His last words were: "No, no, let us pass over the river and rest under the shadow of the trees."

The Meteorites

"He opened the doors of Heaven."—Psalm lxxviii 23.

In the Polar Regions, where the Eskimos live, there are no mines, and therefore no iron, no copper, no tin. Where there are no metals, men have to make their tools and their weapons, their hammers and axes and knives and arrow-heads, of stone, and such men are said to be in the *Stone Age*. With the use of iron what we call civilization begins. That is the reason why such particular mention is made in the 4th chapter of Genesis of Tubal-Cain, "the forger of every cutting instrument of brass and iron." He was a great discoverer and inventor, a man who began a new era in history.

To the Eskimos mines would be of no use. They could not work them on account of the climate, and yet no people ever had more need of metals, for their food consists of what they catch by hunting and by fishing. When there is no man able and willing to do a thing for us, God does it Himself. The Eskimos had need of iron, and as no man gave unto them, the Lord their God brought it, and that in two ways. First, by way of the sea; planks and pieces of wood with nails in them came to them from out of the stormy deep. But, ninety years ago, Captain John Ross, in his vain search for the North-West Passage, found Eskimos with knives of their own

making—little bits of iron, the size of sixpences, fastened in wooden grooves. When he asked them where they got the iron, they said they had broken it off from pieces of a mountain far away.

For this "iron mountain" explorers searched in vain for over seventy years, till in May, 1894, Commander Peary, guided by an Eskimo hunter, found it on the northern shores of Melville Bay, thirty-five miles east of Cape York. Only it was not a mountain that he found, but three masses of metal. The smallest, which was known as "the dog," was two cubit feet in bulk and 1,000 lbs. in weight. At thirty yards distance lay the second, "the woman," twelve cubic feet in bulk, and 6,000 lbs. in weight. And then they came to the largest, the "Ahnighito," 11 feet wide, 7 feet long, and 6 thick, and about 100 tons in weight. This last was lying nearly buried in the earth.

Now, where do you think they came from? Straight from heaven! for they were all meteorites, metallic masses that had fallen from the sky.

In a striking passage in his *Northward over the Great Ice*, published by Messrs. Methuen & Co., London, Commander Peary speculates as to the effect their fall produced, supposing they came after man's arrival in that inhospitable region. "If they fell in the long dark winter night, what terror the detonations, the blinding glare, and the earthquake shock of their fall must have caused among the poor savages cowering in their shaking stone and turf huts. Would it

be strange if they had thought that the sun itself had broken loose and was falling upon the earth, and that the earth was going to pieces under the shock, like one of their own icebergs? If the meteorites fell in summer, how the seals must have plunged for the water, and the polar bears rushed at full speed over the ice-floes, fear-stricken by the awful cataclysm!"

Commander Peary took the two smaller stones home with him in his ship, but the removal of the third was a harder task, and forms the subject of a most fascinating, thrilling chapter in his book. He chartered a steamer for that special purpose in 1896, but his hydraulic jacks and other apparatus were not powerful enough, and he came home defeated. There seemed to be, indeed, something supernatural about the stone. Its shape seemed specially devised to make it difficult to handle in any way, while its dogged, sullen obstinacy and unwillingness to move, its utter contempt and disregard of all attempts to guide it or control it when once in motion, and the remorseless way in which it destroyed everything opposed to it, whether wooden beams or iron bars, astounded all who looked at it. While everything else was buried by the falling snow, it remained quite unaffected by it. The great flakes vanished as they touched it, and left it standing out black and uncompromising. It was, he says, as if it were saying, "I am apart from all this, I am heaven-born, and still carry in my heart some of the warmth of those long-gone days before I was hurled upon this frozen desert." To strengthen this fancy that it still holds some

of its celestial fire and feeling, if a sledge-hammer chanced to strike it, a spouting jet of scintillating sparks lit up the gloom, and a deep note, sonorous as a bell, a polar tocsin, answered the blow.

Determined to secure the giant, Commander Peary returned in 1897 with appliances of greater power, and this time he succeeded. He had his wife and little baby with him, and as the monster, draped in "The Stars and Stripes," began to be moved on board the ship from the rude quay to which they had brought it down, the little baby gave it her own name, "Ahnighito." After a voyage full of peril, the great stone was landed at New York, in one of whose chief museums it now rests. It is the largest known Meteorite in the world, the next to it being one in the British Museum about one-thirtieth its size.

The meteorites, when found, were surrounded by heaps of stones which the Eskimos had used for pounding them. They had discovered that by beating them they could make little pieces scale off, and these pieces again could be beaten till they were thin and sharp. It seemed at first almost cruel to take the meteorites away, but they had served their purpose and their day in the far North. Such iron as the Eskimos need is now brought to them in other ways through the hands of traders and explorers.

The little baby that has been spoken of, Marie Ahnighito Peary—I am sorry I do not know the meaning of her middle name—was born in the Arctic regions on the 12th September, 1893. She saw the cold grey light of summer, saw her father, only once before the long night settled

upon her and her fellow travellers. "Then she was bundled deep in soft, warm furs, and wrapped in the Stars and Stripes! The first six months of her life was spent in continuous lamplight. When the earliest ray of the returning sun pierced through the window of our tiny room, she reached for the golden bar as other children reach for a beautiful toy. Later, when the great night of the Arctic winter had given way to the great day of the Arctic summer, and she lived constantly in the uninterrupted light and brilliant sunshine, the effect upon her was the same as upon the hyacinth and tulip bulbs which, kept for weeks in a dark cellar, and then placed in a window, expand and blossom with astonishing rapidity. When at the age of eleven months little Ahnighito left her native land, she was physically and mentally at least a year in advance of her actual age. Throughout that winter she was the source of the liveliest interest to the natives. Whole families journeyed great distances to see her, and to satisfy themselves by actual touch that she was really a creature of warm flesh and blood, and not of snow, as they at first believed."

REASONS FOR NOT GOING TO CHURCH. XII.

This woman has given up going to Church because it is "so empty" and "it is so depressing," and she is always meeting people who have "the same feeling," and like herself "prefer to remain at home on Sabbaths and read their Bibles."

And it is so different from what it was "when she was young." She often sits and thinks of the days "when the Church was crowded to the door," and she and others "had many a time to sit on the pulpit stairs. But there doesn't seem to be the same earnest, spiritual life there used to be——"

Thou hypocrite!

The Princess Amelia

THE Princess Amelia was the youngest, and as has often happened in large families, the best and most worthy to be remembered of the fifteen children of George III. She was born in 1783 and died in 1810. In the records of her father's Court we get a few brief glimpses of her. The etiquette of those days demanded that on the birthday of any member of the royal family, all the members of it, as well as all the chief officials of Court, should appear in new dresses. On each 7th of August, therefore, we see the Princess, full of girlish glee, now "in a robe-coat covered with fine muslin, a dressed close cap and white gloves"; and now "in a French grey riding dress with pink lapels, with her beautiful, richly flowing, and shining fair locks all unornamented." As a child she very early showed a consciousness of her high rank, yet at the same time won all hearts by her captivating manner and her readiness to be pleased. The rich and the poor meet together, Solomon tells us: the Lord is the maker of them both. Miss Frances Burney, afterwards Madame D'Arblay, the friend of Dr. Johnson, who was at that time second keeper of the robes at Court, writes thus: "This was the third birthday of the little Princess Amelia, and the fondness of the whole family for that lovely child, and her own infantine enjoyment of the honours paid her, have revived the spirits

of the whole house. The manner of keeping the birthdays is very simple. All the Royal Family are new dressed; so, at least, so they appear, are all their attendants. In the evening there was a procession on the terrace. It was really mighty pretty. The little Princess walked on all alone, and first, highly delighted in the parade, and turning from side to side to see everybody as she passed, for all the terraces stand up against the walls, to make a clear passage for the Royal Family, the moment they came in sight. Then followed the King and Queen, no less delighted themselves with the joy of their little darling. The little Princess, then, with a look of inquiry and recollection, slowly, of her own accord, came and looked at me. 'I am afraid,' said I in a whisper, and stooping down, 'your Royal Highness does not remember me?' What think you was her answer? An arch little smile, and a nearer approach, with her lips pouted out to kiss me. I could not resist so innocent an invitation; but the moment I had accepted it, I was half afraid it might seem, in so public a place, an improper liberty; however, there was no help for it. She then took my fan, and having looked at it on both sides, gravely returned it to me, saying 'O! a brown fan?'"

Here is another pretty scene. There was at Court in some capacity or other, an old Mrs. Delany, a friend of the famous Dean Swift. This lady being very ill, the little girl of her own accord, when saying her prayers at her nurse's knee, said "And, O God, make Lany well again."

She was never robust and soon showed signs of failing health. When the nation was celebrating her father's jubilee on the 25th of October, 1810, she was confined to bed with erysipelas. The king, who was then half blind and only sane at intervals, sent for her physicians four or five times a day, entreating them to tell him truly how it went with her.

One day, when he came to see her, she gave him a ring which she had caused to be made—a lock of her hair under crystal set round with diamonds—and saying to him, " Remember me," pressed it on his finger. That was their last meeting. So great was the king's grief that he passed into that last condition of madness from which he never recovered till his death ten years after.

The Princess in her time of trouble wrote some very beautiful and touching lines. Unable either to recall them—for I had never learnt them by heart—or, for the moment, to find any book that contained them, I mentioned my difficulty to an old lady, upwards of eighty-four, who has helped me with the *Morning Watch* many a time, and in more ways than I can tell. Taking up her pen she instantly wrote them down for me, and here they are :

" Unthinking, idle, wild and young,
I laughed, and danced, and talk and sung,
And proud of wealth, of freedom vain,
Dreamed not of sorrow or of pain ;
Concluding in those hours of glee,
That all the world was made for me.

But when the hour of trial came,
When sickness shook this trembling frame,
When folly's gay pursuits were o'er
And I could sing and dance no more,
It then occurred how sad 'twould be
Were this world only made for me."

I wonder if any little girl who reads these words to-day will learn them and be able to say them off by heart when this generation and the next and the next, even three score years and ten, shall have passed away.

Headley Brothers, Ashford, Kent: & 18 Devonshire St., E.C.2.

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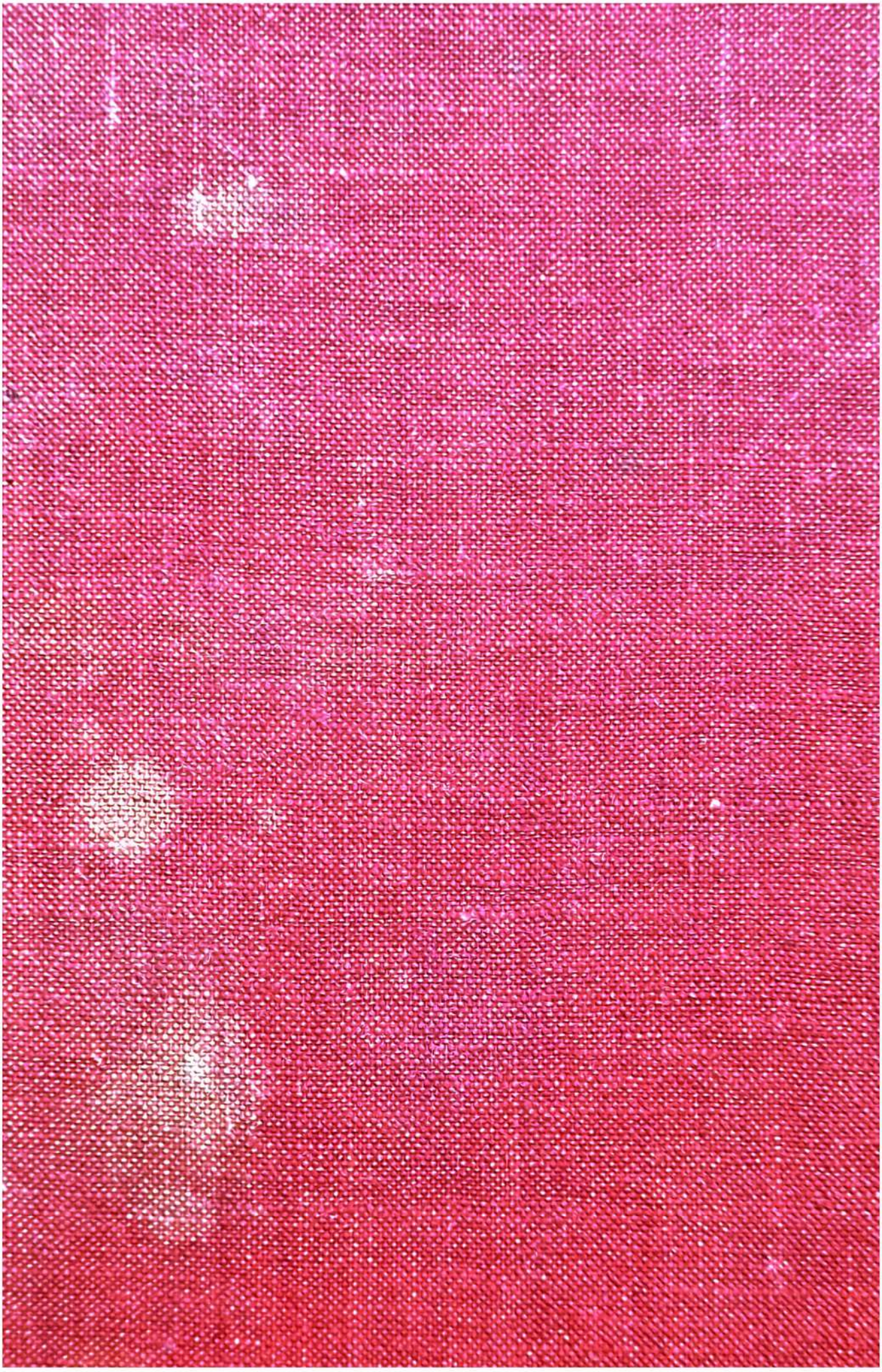
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